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WOMAN IS A RIDDLE. A COMEDY.

As it is Acted at the

Theatre in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.*

By Mr. Christopher Bullock.

—Varium & Mutabile ſemper Fæmina.

Virg.

For 'tis in vain to think to gueſs
At Woman by Appearances.

Hud.

The Second Edition.

LONDON:

Printed for A. Bettesworth, in *Pater-Noſter-Row*; W. Mears, without *Temple-Bar*; T. Woodward, in *Fleet-ſtreet*. M.dcc.xxix.

To the MOST NOBLE

PHILIP,

Marquis of Wharton and Catherlagh,

Earl of WHARTON and RATHFARNAM,

Viſcount *WINCHEADON,*

And Baron of *Wharton* and *Trim.*

MY LORD,

THE Permiſſion of this Addreſs to Your Lordſhip, from ſo young an Author, and one of ſo mean a Rank, is an Honour I could only have expected from Your Lordſhip's Condeſcenſion and Good Nature.

TITLES cannot ſo well diſtinguiſh a NOBLEMAN, as a Propenſity to *Great Actions*;

and *Great Actions* ever ſhew themſelves to beſt Advantage, from the Objects on which employ'd; and that it is peculiar to Your Lordſhip's Character, that You ſet no greater a Value on the *Goods of Fortune*, than as they may be render'd conducive to the Happineſs of that Part of Mankind, over which *Providence* has happily plac'd your Lordſhip; and can look down with a Face of Good Nature on the meaneſt Attempts, the *Honour* You have done me in taking this Comedy under Your Patronage, will demonſtrate to the World.

I had no Deſert by which to pretend to Your Lordſhip's Favour, but you firſt by Your *Generoſity* embolden'd me to throw this *Trifle* at your *Feet*, and then indulg'd me in my Requeſt, by an obliging Willingneſs of becoming my Patron.

It were an Impudence in me to pretend to the Praiſe of Your Lordſhip's Virtues; and it is a *Theme* I doubt not will employ ſome *Pens* of the greateſt Reputation; I ſhall rather chooſe to follow the Judicious Examples of that *Great Painter*, who wiſely drew a *Vail* over thoſe *Beauties* he was conſcious he wanted *Art* to imitate, than to incur the Guilt of derogating from Your many and great Accompliſhments, by my want of Skil to conduct me in ſuch an Undertaking; ſo I

ſhal

ſhall content my ſelf, with ſilently admiring thoſe Perfections in Your Lordſhip, which I freely own I have not a Capacity to deſcribe: The Height of my Ambition is this Liberty of confeſſing my Obligations to Your Lordſhip, and of ſubſcribing my ſelf,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's much oblig'd,

and obedient humble Servant,

Christopher Bullock.

PRO-

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. ELRINGTON.

WIT and You Critics have, in ev'
[ry Age
Maintain'd hot Wars with ſti
[unwearied Rage
The Quarrel might, perhaps, l
[grounded righ
And only Falſe Wit did your Spleens excite:
Thus was your Anger juſt, and its Effect
Good Sence t'eſtabliſh and bad Taſtes correct
But now you judge from Paſſion, not fro
[Reaſon
All Wit's thought Factious, and all Satyr-
[Treaſo
To what ſad End the Bard muſt rack h.
[Brai
Whilſt you'll firſt damn his Words, and then-
[explai
Action and Art are loſt, when Cenſure's Swo
Is ready out, and certain Death's the Word.
Our Author for himſelf all Fears diſclaims
Since he alone at your Diverſion aims;
And counts it Merit, if he can but move
His Pit by Laughter his poor Scenes t'approv

But mourns the ungen'rous Jealousie of Spleen,
That wrests to vile Construction th' harmless
[Scene.

Be just at least, if you will not be kind,
Arraign us not for Things we ne'er design'd:
'Tis hard beneath a double Load to bow;
O be not Partial and Invet'rate too!—
Swoln with Success, and in Opinion high,
Our Rivals all our weak Efforts defie;
And laugh to see us toil and heave in vain,
Like Sisyphus, *a Stone which backwards falls*
[again.

Sure we are seated on Enchanted Ground.
And nought can prosper 'till the Charm's un-
[bound:
If Prejudice the fatal Magick be,
Your Smiles may loose that Charm, and set us
[free!
Let not those poor forsaken Benches show
Like Fairy Rings on which no Grass will grow:
Divide your Favours with an equal Hand,
We'll strive to prize 'em, tho' we can't com-
[mand.
If then our Stage your gen'rous Pity raise,
The less our Merit is, the more your Praise.

Dramatis

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

Colonel Manly; *a Gentleman of Fortune*, — *Mr.* Leigh.
Charles Courtwell; *a Younger Brother of a ſmall Fortune*, — *Mr.* Elrington
Sir Amorous Vainwit; *a Boaſting Pedantick Fop of a large Eſtate*, — *Mr.* Bullock
Mr. Vulture; *an Old Rich Litigious* Stock Jobber, — *Mr.* Bullock
Aſpin; *Servant to Colonel* Manly, — *Mr.* Spiller.
Butler; — *Mr.* Ogden.
Servant; — *Mr.* Eaton.

WOMEN.

Lady Outſide; *a Rich Young Widow*, *Mrs.* Rogers.
Miranda; Courtwell's *Siſter*, *a Young Lady of a good Fortune*, — *Mrs.* Croſs.
Clarinda; *a Gentlewoman of a good Family, debauch'd by Sir* Amorous, — *Mrs.* Spiller.
Neceſſary; *the Widow's Chamber-maid*, — *Mrs.* Elſom.
Betty; Clarinda's *Maid*.

Chairmen.

SCENE, *LONDON*.

Time of Action, from Four of the Clock in the Afternoon till Eleven at Night.

WOMAN IS A RIDDLE.

ACT I. SCENE *a Chamber.*

nter Colonel Manly, *and his Man* Aſpin. *The Colonel peruſing a Letter.*

l. Man. THERE is ſomething in the Adventure of this Lady ſo very unaccountable, (ev'n beyond the natural Extravagance of her Sex) that I am not able to gueſs what ſhe eſigns, or what ſhe ſhou'd be.

Aſpin. Why, Sir, according to my ſhallow Underanding, her Deſign muſt be upon your Perſon; but hat ſhe is, I cannot poſſibly find out; but do firmly elieve 'tis ſome Fairy or other, who has taken a Liking o you.—Why, you laugh now, Maſter, but upon my oul I have not reſted one Night in quiet ſince this hought came into my Head.

Col. Man. Away with theſe fooliſh Chimæra's.

Aſp.

Asp. Why, Sir, you are as unbelieving as a *Jew.*—I am certain I was not deceiv'd last Night; for peeping thro' the Key-hole of the Door, I saw this same Spirit that is in Love with you, and a hopeful Attendant with her; but I own I had not the Courage to go in and keep 'em Company.

Man. And cou'd not you see where they went out?

Asp. See where they went out! Why, no doubt they vanish'd, according to their usual Custom; but let 'em go where they will, I'm sure I was so frighted that as I stood at th' Top of the Stairs, my Fear let me tumble to the Bottom.

Man. It shall go very hard but I'll discover her.—I certainly must be she that I have met three or four times in the Park, the Stile of her Letters is so like the Discourse of that witty Creature—Well, if it be she, and the Beauty of her Face comes up to that of her Shape, her Mien, her lilly Hands and snowy Breasts, I shall run distracted for her.

Asp. That's more than I shall do for her Ladyship's Attendant; besides I don't like this Correspondence with Fairies, my Conscience utterly disapproves of such diabolical Proceedings.

Man. Your Fear, you mean: You'll be very fit to follow me to a Camp if there shou'd be Occasion.

Asp. O dear Sir, by no means. My Talent (I thank you) lies all to Civil Employment; I'll leave the Part of having ones Throat cut to such noble Gentlemen as you are—But for this Spirit, Sir, since you are so arm'd with Resolution, why don't you speak to it?

Man. Why, Sirrah, when I found a Letter upon my Table th' other Day, in which she commanded me to leave an Answer in the same Place, did not I watch a whole Day and Night to see her? And when I despair'd of her Appearance, and stept into the next Room for half a quarter of an Hour, was not my Letter gone at my Return?

Enter Courtwell.

Ha! *Charles Courtwell!* the very Man I was wishing for; I have the most whimsical Adventure to acquaint you with—

Court.

Court. Colonel *Manly*, your Servant: Four o' Clock, and not yet dreſt? Why, 'tis a Miracle to meet with you at Home at this Hour.

Man. Faith I find ſo little good Company abroad, that there's no Temptation.

Court. But I preſume, you have had ſome at Home that has kept you in your Bed ſo late.

Man. No faith, 'twas a Debauch that I made laſt Night, which kept me out of it till Seven this Morning: I have as many Qualms, as a young breeding Woman.

Court. O! you ſhou'd drive out one Debauch with another; you'll not be your ſelf till you're warm with the ſame Sport: What ſay you, will you make one to a Bowl of Rack-Punch at *Charing-Croſs*.

Man. No, faith, I can't approve of your Cure for a Drunken Sickneſs.

Court. If you are not diſpos'd for Drinking, will you go to the Playhouſe, there's a new Comedy to be acted to Night?

Man. I nauſeate the Place; 'tis become worſe of late than a Coffee-Houſe: The Rage of Party is ſo Predominant, that ev'n publick Diverſion is interrupted, and 'tis impoſſible to ſit out a Play with any Satisfaction, for the ridiculous Comments which a Man is oblig'd to hear from the Politicians in the Pit.

Court. That is a publick Grievance indeed, and not to be redreſs'd, but by a general Conſent of the Perſons who frequent the Theatres, by reſolving to go only for their Diverſion, without the poor Satisfaction of indulging their Spleen.

Man. In ſhort, the old Plays are ſo curtail'd for fear of giving Offence to Parties, that if *Shakeſpear*, *Fletcher*, and *Johnſon* were alive, they'd hardly believe their Productions legitimate; and for New Plays, there can be none worth ſeeing, ſince the Viciouſneſs of the Age has beat out Satyr's *tripple* row of Teeth by a kind of general Conſent.

Court. But I muſt tell you, I think you wrong the modern Bards; there are Fools expos'd in moſt of our new Plays.

Man. Ay, I grant you they may be free with the Character of a Fool, for no Man will take that to himself; the greatest Coxcomb that ever was, believ'd himself a Wit; but for Knaves, who dare meddle with them in this Age. In short, the World is become so wicked, that 'tis almost Criminal to speak against Knavery, and you can hardly lash a Vice, without creating a potent Enemy.

Court. The mercenary Temper of the Poets has not a little conduc'd to the Prohibition of a Satyr.

Man. True; we have not a *Wycherly* now, no Plain-Dealer left in the Tribe, they drop the Design of Comedy, with the publick Good, for their private Interests; and Fear, or Gain, or both, make 'em rather countenance, than lash the Vices of the Age; they study nothing now, but to advance the Profits of the Third Day, so lard their Plays with Party Invectives, and by severely railing at one Side, get their abominable Stuff supported by the Interest of the other.

Court. Well, I perceive you are no ways dispos'd for any Diversion to Night, so I'll leave you to your Meditations.

Man. No, you shan't go yet.

Court. O, I had forgot; Prithee what's the Adventure you have to acquaint me with?

Man. I'll tell you —— You must know I have an invisible Mistress, a Thing of Air, that conjures itself thro' the Keyhole of my Door, leaves Letters for me upon the Table, and returns for their Answers.

Court. This is surprizing indeed.

Man. Faith 'tis true, tho' —— I have left a Letter upon the Table in this very Room, lock'd the Door, taken the Key in my own Pocket, went out, return'd in half an Hour, my Letter has been gone, and another, by way of Reply, left in its Place. There's the last, prithee read it.

Court. (reads) *Colonel, You are very importunate to know who I am, and by what Power I converse with you thus: Be satisfy'd, I am worth the knowing, but will not discover my self. Love is the Power by which I move, and I take a Pleasure in*

in puzzling them I have the greateſt Value for. Set Invention to work, for I am a Riddle, expound me, and take me.

This is the moſt romantick Adventure I ever heard of.

Man. So you wou'd ſay indeed, did you know all — She is acquainted with all my Affairs, even my moſt ſecret; nay, ſhe has intimated her Knowledge of a Diſcourſe that happen'd only betwixt you and I, when you propos'd your Siſter to me, and which you enjoin'd me particularly to keep a Secret: In theſe Affairs ſhe is extravagantly ſurprizing; that damn'd impertinent Vice, *Curioſity*, which ruin'd the firſt Woman, has fruitfully ſpread itſelf thro' the whole Sex, to the Interruption of many a charming Intrigue, and more particularly actuates this little Fairy, this thing of Air, which haunts me; for I have not had an Affair with any Woman this Month, tho' never ſo ſecretly managed, but ſhe has diſcover'd; for my part, I believe ſhe deals with the Devil.

Aſp. Now, Maſter, I am inclin'd to believe 'tis the Devil himſelf; the rather, becauſe he wears Petticoats, and chooſes the Shape of a Woman, the eaſier to compaſs the Ruin of a Man; beſides, 'tis a Form that beſt agrees with his Infernal Qualities; for I have often heard married Men affirm, That a Woman has ſo much of the Devil in her Nature, that ſometimes 'twou'd puzzle a Conjurer to diſtinguiſh one from t'other.

Man. Your Aſſurance his ill-tim'd —— What evil Converſation has corrupted your Manners? [*Exit* Aſpin.

Court. Aſpin approves of a modern Axiom, a Man had better loſe his Friend than his Jeſt — You may obſerve by his Sentiments how apt we are to imitate our Superiors: The very Footmen grow prophane, and Senſe is ſo much miſtaken in theſe Days, that Religion and Matrimony are the common Topicks for the Raillery of our modern Wits, Lewdneſs being the diſtinguiſhing Mark of a fine Gentleman, and Atheiſm of a Wit.

Man. This Humour ſpreads itſelf too much — But as only foul Stomachs corrupt wholeſome Food, ſo weak Underſtanding only receive the Infection ——Ignorance is the rank Soil which produces the Weeds of Atheiſm

and Obſcenity; but a Man of true Senſe dares be modeſt and religious, notwithſtanding the Tyranny of Cuſtom.

Court. Cuſtom indeed is the greateſt Enemy to Truth; ſhe has made ſuch a Similitude between Wiſdom and Folly, they are hardly to be diſtinguiſh'd, and very often miſtaken one for the other.

Man. Eſpecially in our modern Converſation, where the height of Wiſdom conſiſts in expoſing the Imperfections of Mankind, and Rudeneſs and Ill-Nature paſs for Underſtanding.

Court. Well, 'tis pity Raillery ever ſhou'd be accepted for Wit.

Man. Which it will be, as long as Ill-Nature pleaſes every Body but the Perſon 'tis aim'd at.

Court. I am ſurpriz'd that the Vice or Folly of a Man ſhou'd contribute to the Pleaſure of his Fellow-Creatures.

Man. Theſe Philoſophical Sentiments will never recommend us to the Ladies——If you deſign the Acquiſition of their Favours, you muſt comply with the Mode, make your Wit a Pimp to your Pleaſure, your Reaſon a Servant to your Intereſt; flatter the Perſon you have a Deſign upon, be ſatyrically rude to the reſt of her Company, and exquiſitely ſcurrilous upon her abſent Acquaintance; Scandal and Tea are a fine Woman's Nouriſhment. But this is a Leſſon you are not to learn; and now we talk of a fine Woman, how goes the Widow and thee on?

Court. Why, faith, like Man and Wife, continually quarrelling; but I have at laſt found her to be a very Woman.

Man. How mean you?

Court. She makes an Aſs of every Lover ſhe has, and don't know her own Mind half an Hour together; conſtant in nothing; her Vanity is intolerable; ſhe has ſuch an Opinion of her Beauty, ſhe believes every Man that ſees her is languiſhing; and notwithſtanding her Vow againſt Matrimony, 'tis her greateſt Ambition to have a Crowd of Admirers; ſhe has Servants of all Sorts, and all Degrees, from the Nobleman to the Mechanick; from the Beau to the Ruſtick; from the Rake to the Uſurer; from the

gay

gay airy Fop of Twenty-one, to the supercilious Fanatick of Fifty-two; and from a red Coat and a Feather, to a japan'd Cane and a brush'd Beave:——In short, she has more Lovers than a pretty Wench in an University.

Man. I find the Widow has as many Worshippers as the Ass that carry'd the *Egyptian* Goddess, when many bow'd their Knees not to the Beast but to the Burden.

Court. Your Comparison is somewhat impolite.

Man. But apt and reasonable, Faith *Charles*: a free Jointure is the most attractive Grace in a Widow. I grant you may in the height of your Passion, say a world of fine Things of the Woman; but believe me, you amorous Wasps that make such Musick about the Gally-pot, come only for the Honey that's in't: But is it possible thou can'st have a real Passion for the Widow?

Court. Why not? She has Youth and Good-Nature, and her Beauty is able to soften the most obdurate Heart.

Man. Thy Heart, *Courtwell*, is like a Looking-Glass, it presently receives the Image of what is represented before it, and as soon loses it; But you have a very powerful Rival that you don't know of yet, Sir *Amorous Vainwit.*

Court. I have seen the Gentleman, but have no Acquaintance with him. What Sort of a Spark is he?

Man. A Fellow that makes Intrigues the greatest Business of his Life; he's a Romance in *Folio*, compos'd of a thousand comical Adventures and pleasant Intrigues, which he vouches all to be his own. He has one Vice I greatly dislike; he will boast of Favours receiv'd from the first Women of Quality, when I am sure the Rogue never had an Affair with any thing above his Laundress's Daughter, a Chamber-Maid, or a Citizen's Wife.

Enter Aspin.

Asp. Sir *Amorous Vainwit*'s Chariot is at the Door; will your Honour be pleas'd to be within?

Man. Yes: Wait on him up. This worthy Knight will promise as much as a Courtier, and perform as little; when you are out of his Sight you are out of his Memory: He speaks ill of no Man to his Face, nor well of any behind their Backs, and is even vexatiously kind

with his Complements and external Civilities: He is often affronted, but never out of Humour; nay, I have known him tread upon a Man's Toes, on purpose to shew his Talent in asking Pardon: He is wond'rous fond of obsolete Words; I have known him compliment a Lady in the Terms of Chymistery and Fortification; his Conversation is meer Pedantry; he's full as ridiculous, and more unintelligible than a Quack-Physician.

Court. This is a very whimsical Character, and maliciously witty. Is he learned?

Man. Yes, as a *French* Taylor, in nothing but the Fashions.

Court. Of what Family is he?

Man. He was the Son of a Mercer; his Father was a good indulgent Man, and strove to make him (what Nature never design'd) a Scholar, and a Man of Parts: He put him early to the University, where he staid three Years to small purpose; from thence he was transplanted to one of our Collegiate Inns of Common Law, where he soon grew lawless, and unlearn'd his former little: But a Relation dying, and leaving a good Estate, he endeavour'd to improve himself, by seeing Foreign Places, so at once travell'd from his Country and himself, made the Tour of *France*, and is now return'd a very accomplish'd Ass.

Court. Did he bring Home nothing?

Man. Yes, abundance of mis-shap'd Cloaths, and the Vices of the Country.

Enter Sir Amorous *(laughing.)*

Sir Amo. Oh, *Manly!* I have almost burst my Sides with laughing. Ha, ha, ha!—Such an Adventure!—Ha, ha, ha!

Man. What's the Occasion of this Excess of Mirth?

Sir Amo. Occasion! Ha, ha, if ever there was greater Occasion, may I be—Ha! who's that? Mr. *Courtwell* here!—Now may Convulsions seize and excruciate my Optick Nerves if I saw him before—O Stupidity unparallel'd, incongruous to all Sense and Breeding; 'sdeath, I have inadvertently and precipitately illaqueated my self in an irrecoverable Confusion—I am totally debilitated of all Power of Elocution, utterly incapable to excogi-

ate

ate an Apology of Efficacy, to abrogate his Cenſure of my Ruſticity.

Man. Sir *Amorous*, won't you ſpeak to Mr. *Courtwell*.

Sir Amo. Sir, I beg ten thouſand Pardons for my abrupt entring the Room, deviating from the Rules of polite Breeding, and erroneouſly neglecting the juſt Oeconomy of good Behaviour, and can only hope to expiate the Guilt of my Inadvertency, by an Aſſeveration of a ſpontanous Contrition. I categorically bluſh to think how agretical I have been;——but the Faculties of my Soul were ſo dilated with the Novelty of my Adventure, that I unavoidably fell into this exorbitant and exuvious Reflux of Laughter, committing a Soliciſm of this Magnitude in good Manners.

Court. Sir, your good Manners give you too much trouble.

Sir Amo. Prithee, *Manly*, introduce me to Mr. *Courtwell*; I long to be acquainted with him, Dem me.—

Man. Can't you introduce your ſelf, Sir.

Sir Amo. No, this Surprize has put me quite out of Countenance.

Man. That's a Miracle——Mr. *Courtwell*, this is Sir *Amorous Vainwit*, my particular Friend, and a Gentleman that has long had an Ambition to be known to you.

Sir Amo. Sir, I ſhou'd think my ſelf much honour'd to be rank'd in the Number of your Acquaintance.

Court. To add one to the Number of my Friends, you are welcome, Sir.

Sir Amo. Sir, you do me too much Honour.

Man. But Sir *Amorous*, what Adventure is this you are ſo full of? Come, unlade, unlade.

Sir Amo. What! before Mr. *Courtwell*?

Man. Ay, ay, he's one of us, you may ſpeak before him.

Sir Amo. May I—Why then I will——You know we Wits ought to be free before one another——There's *Charles Lackwit*, a pretty adroit Fellow, faith; very alert, and behaves well, when he and I meet at *Button's*, we are the moſt facetious Company in the Univerſe; egad we make Wit a perfect Tennis-Ball, bandy it from one to th' other. Why cou'd you think it?—We have laugh'd

laugh'd at one another for three Hours together——As for my part, but no matter——I'll not ſpeak——A Man ſhou'd not ſound his own Trumpet you know——but I have put my Hand in the Lyon's Mouth,——and that, Sir,—ſomebody knows very well—

Court. But, Sir, your Adventure?

Sir Amo. Gadſo, that's true——Why, you muſt know Mr. *Courtwell*, I had the good Fortune yeſterday, to receive a Letter of Invitation from a certain Lady of Quality, to come and play a Game or two at Picquet with her in her Husband's Abſence;—Now it was impoſſible, with Honour, to refuſe meeting ſo fair a Challenger; not that I had any violent Inclination——for I had, at the ſame time, above twenty Aſſignations upon my Hands—I don't know what the Devil the Women ſee in me——'Tis the Pleaſure of my Stars——But, to proceed—Fortune unluckily ſent her Husband home before we expected him, which put the Lady ſomewhat in a Hurry; but I quickly diſſipated her Fear, by concealing my ſelf under the Table——Well, the Husband enter'd the Room, and in a few Minutes call'd for Supper, which upon the Word, was brought in: Then, Sir, the Lady and he ſat down to it——But the beſt Jeſt is to come, Ha, ha, ha, for you muſt know, the Cuckold putting his Legs under the Table, and feeling me lie in his Way, gives me a confounded Kick on the Guts, crying, Get you out, you naſty, dirty Cur——A Pox on him for a cornuted Coxcomb, that cou'd not ſmell his Hornet from his Houſe-Dog.

Man. But you lay ſtill I ſuppoſe.

Sir Amo. Moſt certainly—A Lady's Reputation is ever ſafe in the ſacred Repoſitory of my Underſtanding. But pray mark what follows:——The Monſier was not contented with one Kick, but immediately gives me two or three more, crying, *Robin*, prithee pull this Dog from under the Table, I can't make him ſtir.

Court. How came you off then, Sir *Amorous*?

Sir Amo. Ha, ha, ha, came off! why triumphantly: For upon hearing that, I caught hold of part of his Leg with my Teeth, and bit him confoundedly:—He roar'd out like a Bull—Damme, the Dog has got hold of my Leg—

Leg—His Wife (knowing the Trick) pretended a Fright, ſqual'd out, leap'd up, and (as the ſaying is) accidentally on purpoſe overthrew the Table, and put out the Lights;—which gave me the Opportunity of making my Eſcape in the Hurry——which with Celerity I did, by *Jupiter*

Court. I'll aſſure you, a very pleaſant Adventure. So you ſav'd the Lady's Reputation, and came off unhurt your ſelf.

Sir Amo. I can't ſay altogether unhurt, becauſe in the Fall of the Table, I happen'd to have a Diſh of Soup overthrown upon me, which ſpoil'd a Suit of white Cloaths, and ſcalded my Legs confoundedly.

Man. That I confeſs was unfortunate: But where have you been this Morning?

Sir Amo. In *Elyzium*, by *Jupiter*.

Man. How!

Sir Amo. Revelling in Pleaſures Imperial.

Man. Explain, explain, Man.

Sir Amo. Why, to deal ingenuouſly with you, I have paid a Viſit this Morning to one of the beautiful'ſt Women in the Univerſe——A Lady, Mr. *Courtwell*, that I had the good Fortune to rake by the Heart ſome time ago;——but I can't forbear telling you the Happineſs I enjoy'd this Morning with that Maſterpiece of Nature—but I won't neither, you'll think me vain.

Man. Rather than you ſhou'd believe ſo, we'll not inſiſt on it.

Sir Amo. Won't you?——Why, faith that's Good-natur'd now, and I will tell you——You muſt know the Minute my Chariot ſtopt at the Door, I was met by her Woman, and with the moſt exuberant Satisfaction, conducted to her Chamber; which I no ſooner enter'd, but I had a full View of this charming Creature: I, Sir, adjuſted my ſelf with an agreeable Air, fetch'd a deep Sigh, clapt one Hand in my Boſom, and made a Bow down to the Ground——She, Sir, riſes out of her eaſy Chair, lets fly her looſe Gown, ſtretches out her Arms, crying, Ah, you Devil, what do you come for this Morning?——Her Poſture was ſo provoking, and her Queſtion ſo agreeable, that without anſwering one Word,

Word, I ſhot into her Arms at once, embracing her with Herculean Force, and with a voracious Appetite fed on her lovely Lips, which were ſever'd by a Breath ſweeter than *Arabian* Winds, more fragrant than Violet Buds juſt opening to the Morning's Eye, and on thoſe Roſy Mounts, inviting to the Taſte, there hangs an amorous Moiſture, Nectarious Dew, ſweeter than that the Sun, when ſhining o'er the Eaſtern Hills, exhales from the Carnation Buds.

Court. But, Sir *Amorous*, of ſo many fine Women you have convers'd with, was you never honourably in Love with any one?

Sir Amo. Never, by *Jupiter*——and if ever I become guilty of that Folly, may I be conjugally trapp'd——No, Sir, I ne'er was reduc'd to the Neceſſity of gaining honourably one Woman, becauſe I ever had the good Fortune to find the whole Sex at my Service, and upon my own Terms.

Court. You are a fortunate Man indeed; but notwithſtanding your Succeſs, I muſt believe there are a great many virtuous Women in the World.

Sir Amo. I can't contradict you, becauſe I never try'd 'em all,——but may I periſh if I don't think a handſom young Fellow, Importunity, and Opportunity, wou'd ſhake the firmeſt Foundation of Virtue in any young Woman in Chriſtendom.

Man. I wonder you ſhou'd be ſo averſe to Matrimony, but I durſt venture a good Sum you change your Opinion before the Year ends.

Court. Ay, ay, we muſt have you dub'd o'th' Order: What, Sir, you that have unmarry'd done ſuch Service in the Commonwealth, ought to receive the Honours due to it in Marriage.

Man. That he may do and never marry.

Sir Amo. As how! as how!—Come, I know you have a biting Jeſt at your Tongue's end: I like your Wit well, Colonel. Come, as how? as how?

Man. Why, if you can prove your Father was o'th' Order (which is very poſſible, we know he was a Citizen) and you lawfully begotten, then by the laudable Cuſtom

Cuſtom of the City, you may be a Cuckold by your Father's Copy, and never ſerve for it.

Sir Amo. Gad, I have ſomething in my Head that's very good.

Man. Is it poſſible! Come, out with it in the Name of Vanity.

Sir Amo. Why then, I muſt needs ſay, Colonel, your Satyr is like a Bee, it carries both Honey and a Sting, ha, ha, ha, you muſt allow that to be good.

Man. O admirable! Wit comes as eaſily from you, Sir *Amorous*, as Preferment from a Courtier without Money, or Money from a Citizen without Security.

Sir Amo. Very good again, Faith; I'd give an hundred Pounds I cou'd have ſaid ſuch a thing my ſelf.

Enter Aſpin.

Aſp. Sir, a Porter brought this Letter for your Honour.

Sir Amo. Hum——hum——hum——'ſdeath, a Man of Intrigue has a curſed Life——A Pox on't, I'll not go——The poor Soul will break her Heart too——Bid my Chariot turn about——Gentlemen, I muſt ask your Pardon, I hope the Violence of my Occaſions will efficatiouſly prevail upon your Good Nature to excuſe my abrupt Departure.

Man. O! we gueſs th' Occaſion, and 'twould be barbarous to detain you.

Sir Amo. Generous Soul!——Mr. *Courtwell*, I beg you'll give me an Opportunity to eſtabliſh an Acquaintance with you, and convince you how much I am your Admirer and humble Servant.

Court. Sir, 'tis an Honour you muſt confer on me.

[*Exit Sir* Amorous.

Man. What think you of this Spark for a Rival?

Court. I have no great Apprehenſion of Danger from that Quarter; beſides, I have luckily thought of a way to take him off from my Lady *Outſide*.

Man. As how?

Court. By propoſing my Siſter to him.

Man. Very conſcientiouſly conſider'd! you'd ruin your Siſter by marrying her to a Coxcomb, only to ſecure your Miſtreſs.

Court.

Court. No——I'll only engage him to make his Addreſſes to her, and pre-acquaint her with my Deſign, that ſhe may hold him in play to give me the fairer Opportunity with the Widow: In ſhort, I have told her the Propoſal I made to you, but not your unkind Anſwer.

Man. No, that wou'd have been barbarous;——for tho' I have no very agreeable Thoughts of Matrimony, I ſhou'd be glad of her Friendſhip; an agreeable Acquaintance gives a Reliſh to all the Pleaſures of Life—— When ſhall I ſee her?

Court. That's a Queſtion I can't tell how to anſwer. I diſprove of a mutual Friendſhip between Perſons of a different Sex, when there are no Thoughts of Marriage; ſuch Intimacies are pernicious to Virtue, at leaſt to Reputation, and Converſation too often diſcovers Charms that prove fatal to their Owner.

Man. Your Diſtruſt of my Friendſhip will bring your own Sincerity into Suſpicion. I own I love my Pleaſure, but not ſo paſſionately as to ſacrifice my Friend to it.

Court. Why, look ye, Colonel, we may pleaſe our ſelves with very fine Notions of Friendſhip and Honour, but ẽgad, when Youth, Wit and Beauty come in Competition, Reaſon generally ſinks under th' Aſſault: The Eyes of a fine Woman are victorious Aſſailants; there's a ſort of Magick in Beauty, which no Philoſophy is Proof againſt. Deſire is an irreſiſtable Tyrant, that will break thro' the moſt ſacred Tyes; and you muſt excuſe me (I knowing your Temper) if I can't approve of your Acquaintance with my Siſter, but upon an honourable Intention.

Man. But may I ſee your Widow? Prithee tell me where ſhe lodges.

Court. I muſt ask your Pardon; I have Rivals enough already, and wou'd not create more. 'Tis not proper I ſhou'd let him know the Widow lodges in my Siſter's Houſe. [*Aſide.*] Well, I'll take my leave of you for the preſent, and immediately put my Deſign upon Sir *Amorous* in Execution: In the mean Time, I'll ſet a third Perſon on, who is my Friend, to perſwade the Widow to my Intereſt; while I, the better to hide my Artifice,

Artifice, will add Deceit to it, and upon Sir *Amorous's* Neglect, will seem a little cold my self, which can't fail to make her the more complying: 'Tis the Nature of the Sex to judge of the Merit by the Number of their Admirers, and when courted by many, they generally are insolent to all.

Man. I always thought Love made an Ass of a Man, but never knew it made a Politician of him before.

Court. Take this for a certain Maxim:

Love Business by Deceit is surest done;
Woman's deceitful, and by that she's won. [Exeunt.

The End of the First ACT.

ACT II. SCENE *a Chamber.*

Lady Outside *discover'd at a Toylet,* Necessary *waiting.*

Wid. THESE Weeds are very becoming to a fair Complexion, tho' I am quite weary of acting, and long to be out of 'em. Prithee, *Necessary,* how long has Sir *Thomas Outside* been dead?

Necef. Has Sir *Thomas* been dead——let me see——He has been dead just two Months and five Days, Madam.

Wid. No longer! I vow it seems an Age.

Necef. One would not suppose your Ladyship thought so by your inconsolable Grief; for I never hear his Name mention'd in Company, but that your Ladyship's ready to go into Fits.

Wid. Why ay; Custom has impos'd upon our Sex that Act of Dissimulation: Not but I must own, Tears upon that Occasion are very decent, and necessary.

Necef. Methinks your Ladyship was somewhat too

raſh, when you made a Vow never to marry again; but I hope you don't mean to keep it.

Wid. Do'ſt think I'm mad?——No, no, that Vow, *Neceſſary*, was Policy, it makes the Men the more eager to addreſs me; they are naturally vain, and love to engage with Difficulties——You ſee how I am peſter'd with humble Servants, for all my Vows.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, Mr. *Vulture* is come to wait on your Ladyſhip.

Wid. Deſire him to come up. [*Exit* Servant.] D'ye hear, *Neceſſary*, give me a clean Handkerchief, and my Bottle of Hartſhorn——Well, there's a great deal of Trouble in performing the Ceremonies of Widowhood, and I really began ſo violently, that I fear, for Decency ſake, I ſhall be oblig'd not to marry till my Year's expir'd.

Enter Mr. Vulture.

Vult. Madam, I am your humble Servant: What, ſtill weeping? Rainy Weather ſtill!——A good Husband may ſerve as a warm Sun, to exhale thoſe untimely Showers: But, Madam, I have made bold to wait on you this Morning, to know if I might wiſh you Joy yet of gaining your Cauſe?

Wid. No, good Mr. *Vulture*, nor I don't know when I ſhall, there are ſo many Delays in the Law.

Vult. Indeed and ſo there are——but I hope you have good Council—for a Law-Suit may be ſaid to reſemble a Game of Cheſs, that may be play'd for Years by a Couple of expert Gameſters, but a Bungler may loſe it by one falſe Move.

Wid. You obſerve right, good Mr. *Vulture:* And then 'tis like a fine new Building, no body can tell what it will coſt, or when 'twill be finiſh'd—But pray ſit down, Mr. *Vulture*, I want a little of your Advice; you know a great deal of the Law. [*They both ſit.*

Vult. I have ſome Reaſon, good my Lady; for I think come *Eaſter*-Term next, I have been in Law ſeven and forty Years.

Wid. You muſt now, Mr. *Vulture*, my Adverſary has not pleaded yet.

Vult.

Vult. Non pleadavit Adversarius, say you, so much the better, Madam :——Why what a Blockhead was his Attorney! Look'e, Madam, if he does not deliver in his Declaration by the next Essoign-Day, we'll Nonsuit him, and snap Judgment by Default. Pray Madam, who is your Attorney?

Wid. Mr. *Latitat* of *Lyon's*-Inn.

Vult. A very good Man truly, an experienc'd Practitioner, one that understands all the Quirks, Tricks, and Doublings of the Law. He is, in Truth, a stanch Attorney——But——

Wid. But what Sir?——

Vult. He does not put in Practice what he knows, he is a little too scrupulous; then there is another Thing, Madam, he wants Tools to work with.

Wid. What d'you mean, Sir?

Vult. Witnesses, Madam; they are the Life-Blood of a Cause; a good Attorney can no more thrive without 'em, than a Sharper can without false Dice——Now my Attorney, old *Cerberus* of *Clement's*-Inn, is never without 'em, Witnesses of all Sorts and Sizes, Fellows that are us'd to swear with brazen Faces, good Memories, and sear'd Consciences.

Wid. You jest with me sure——Is it possible there can be such Villany?

Vult. Ah! Madam, I perceive you don't know the World; there's no living in't without Industry and Artifice: My Friend *Cerberus* has found it by Experience, for he is worth near Forty Thousand Pounds.

Wid. I find, Mr. *Vulture*, Money is the only Deity you adore.

Vult. Except your fair self, my good Lady; for I have learnt by near fifty Years Experience, that the richest Men in the Nation have been always esteem'd the wisest and the best——But this is foreign to your Law-Suit, I wou'd recommend to your Ladyship some of those Witnesses.

Wid. To me!——I had rather lose my Cause, than make use of such hellish Instruments.——Have you no Conscience?

Vult. Ye——ye——yes, Madam; I have a convenient,

fashionable, modern *Surtout* Conscience, to slip on and off as Occasion shall serve.

Neces. My Lady will be blest with a Husband. [*Aside.*

Wid. Well, but Mr. *Vulture*, if my Adversary shou'd plead, I shou'd be loth to stand to the Judgment of the Court.

Vult. Non ad Judicium!——Do you fear Corruption? Then I have a Trick to relieve you again:—— You shall get a *Habeas Corpus, cum Causa*, and remove it higher.

Wid. I find, Mr. *Vulture*, you have Tricks enow o' Conscience.

Vult. I have Tricks enow o' Law, no matter for Conscience——'tis not a Thing to thrive by—None but poor Folks pretend to it:——Ah! Madam! I love a litigious Suit; 'tis very *Manna* to me to be in Law; there is a Pleasure in the Vexation of others; I hug my self with the Thoughts of out-lawing a poor Rascal for Forty Shillings, before he knows any Thing of the Matter. I begin with *Capeas, alias & plures, Exigent* and *Proclamation*, and so proceed to a *Capeas ullagatum*, in the twinkling of a Term, and before he is *rectus in curea*, 'twill cost him Ten Pounds to reverse th' Outlawry: Then the unspeakable Satisfaction there is of hunting him thro' the several Windings and Labyrinths of the Law, to plague him with Ejectments, Elegits, Extents, Judgments, Executions, *Casa, & fi fa, Scire-facias*, special Pleadings, Demurrers, Writs of Error, Rejoinders, Surrejoinders, Rebuters, Surrebuters, *cum multis aliis, que nunc prescribere longum est*; and then afterwards to toss him like a Tennis-ball thro' all the Courts of *Westminster-Hall*, from the Common-Pleas to the King's-Bench; thence to the Exchequer, and from thence into Chancery; and before the Game's up, I have a Bisk in my Sleeve, an Appeal to the House of Peers.

Wid. I see, Mr. *Vulture*, you are a perfect Master in the Jargon of the Law.

Vult. Truly, Madam, I have Reason: I have been a Term-Trotter any Time these seven and forty Years: In which space I have been at least sixteen Times beggar'd, and got up again, and in the Mire again, that I have stunk

ſlunk again, and yet got up again——And now at this Time I can make it appear, that by Lying in *Change-Alley*, and Swearing in *Weſtminſter-Hall*, I have got an Eſtate worth, *declaro*, Fifty Thouſand Pounds; marry my good Lady, no contemptible Fortune; and *(in felice hora* be it ſpoken) I have at this Preſent nine and twenty Suits in Law.

Wid. Deliver me! what a wicked Caterpillar is this! [*Aſide.*

Vult. And all not worth Forty Shillings——A Stake pull'd out of my Hedge, there's one: I was well beaten I remember, there's two: When my Wife was living I took a Man in Bed with her, there's three; I was call'd Cuckold for my Labour, there's four: A Neighbour kill'd my Dog for howling, there's five: My Wife miſcarry'd with a Puſh, there's ſix, *& ſic de cæteris*—— I have ſo vex'd and beggar'd the whole Pariſh with Proceſſes, Subpœna's, and ſuch like Moleſtations, they are not able to ſpare ſo much ready Money from a Term as to ſet up a new Weather-Cock upon the Church; nay, the Church-Wardens are forc'd to go to Law with the Poor's Money——Then again, I ſubpœna you up all the Men from the Village where I live every Term, ſo that 'tis impoſſible to be at civil Cuckoldry within our ſelves, unleſs the whole Country riſe upon our Wives.

Wid. One may gueſs by what you've ſaid, you are not very well belov'd in your Neighbourhood.

Vult. No, marry wou'd I not, my good Lady; I know how to get more by my Enemies than my Friends; I am a perfect Maſter of the Science, and can fight you out all my Weapons at Law as clean as any Man.

Wid. What do you mean by your Weapons at Law?

Vult. There be ſeveral—As, your Writ of Delay, that is your Long-Sword; *Scandalum Magnatum* is Back-Sword, *Capeas & Quominus*, Caſe of Rapiers; a Writ of Execution, Sword and Dagger; a good Conſcience, Sword and Buckler——But that is a Weapon we ſeldom now-a-Days make uſe of in *Weſtminſter-Hall*; indeed 'tis quite out of Date.

Neveſ. Pray, Sir, what Religion are you of?

[*Very gravely, and curteſying.*

Vult. What Religion am I of?—Marry, Sweetheart, that's an odd Question—Why, I am of—Why what Religion am I of—Why I am a Stock-Jobber, Sweetheart, and now and then I am a Sollicitor upon Occasion.

Neces. Here's a Rogue for you, who makes Interest his Religion—yet passes in the Eye of the World for a sober honest Man. [*Aside.*

Vult. Getting Money, and going to Law, are the greatest Pleasures of my Life—I have got you in a Morning, in *Change-Alley*, by a well invented Lye, a Brace of Thousands. I ha, ha, ha, landed the Duke of *Berwick* twice in the North of *Scotland*, and got considerably by it—I took *Sterling-Castle* once, but that indeed did not answer, Stocks fell but One and a half *per Cent.* by that—Take my Word, Madam, I am a very ingenious Person.—But, Madam, I am come once more to you upon the old Cause—I hope you have almost, by this time, overcome your Grief for the Death of your first Husband, and will begin to consider upon making some other Man happy; I need not recommend my self to you more than I have done! You may find I am a Man to thrive in the World; and tho' I am a little old, I am hearty, Widow—and tho' the Snow does lie upon the Mountain-top, let me tell you there's a Warmth in the Valley.

Wid. O Mr. *Vulture*, you are a Man that I could have no Objection to, but my Vows, my Vows—and then to think of my poor Husband, the kindest, best of Husbands, Oh! oh! oh! [*cries out.*] Oh! I shall never forget him!

Neces. No, nor I neither, Madam, I am sure I'm ready to break my Heart ev'ry time I think of him—for he was a-a-a ve-ve-very good Man at the bottom. Oh! oh! oh!

Vult. He was a very good Man indeed—I can't forbear Weeping too when I think of him. [*All cry.*

Enter Sir Amorous.

Sir Am. Madam, your Ladyship's most obsequious Vassal—Hey day! what! where am I? In the House of Mourning sure—Come, come, Madam, dry your Eyes; your Grief is of too long Duration: Pity your fair self,

clear

clear up those radiant Lamps, restore 'em to their first Creation, Windows for Light, not Sluices made for Tears.

Vult. Verily, my good Lady, the Gentleman is in the right on't: Come, come, you must forget him.

Sir Am. Forget him! Ay, ay, Madam, and lose the Thoughts of him in the Possession of a better Husband.

Wid. Ah Sir, that's impossible! His Fellow's not on Earth.

Sir Am. No, Madam: Why, what d'you think of me? [*Turning to the Glass, and adjusting himself.*

Vult. Ay, Madam, or what d'you think of me — Mighty pretty Eyes those—mighty pretty Eyes truly—Hide 'em for Shame, hide 'em, or you'll kill every body you look upon—[*Peeping in her Breasts.*] Gads my Life! there's a pair of delicate white Breasts to stare a Man in the Face—Nay, you have murder'd me, that's certain, I'll lay my Death to you.

Wid. You are pleas'd to be merry, Sir.

Vult. Say you so?—But 'tis in your Power to make me merrier, you understand me—[*Patting her with his Cane.*] Mum! a word to the Wise is enough—ha! those Eyes! those Eyes! why, I am not so old as I look to be—I am not above Threescore; a good Age, a very good Age indeed—I have liv'd temperately, not wasted my Health, nor my Strength upon the wanton Baggages of the Town, Hem! hem! There's Lungs! there's a Voice like a Game-Cock—Hem! hem: [*falls a Coughing*, Necessary *strikes him on the Back.*] So very well Sweetheart; I am mightily troubled with Phlegm—od I took it a little too high for my Constitution, but every time I look upon you, I fancy my self but Eighteen, and my Heart springs in my Belly like a Bird in a Cage. [*Coughs.*] Oh Phlegm, Phlegm!

Sir Am. Pray Madam, how do you like the Cloaths I have on to Day?

Wid. They're wonderful becoming, and the Fancy perfectly new.

Sir Am. Indeed, Madam, they have an exotick Air, that's true.

Wid. There's no Man dresses more agreeable than you do

do Sir *Amorous*, or obliges the Town with more new Fancies.

Sir Am. And without Vanity I speak it, no Man has been more successful in that Matter than my self——Pray Madam, observe how I put on my Hat——There, does not that look very smart?

Wid. O very smart.

Sir Am. I have an inimitable Cock with my Hat, that adds a Vivacity to my Looks, and gives my whole Face an Air agreeable and serene; and now I am talking of Dress, I'll tell you something very pleasant upon that Subject:—You must know, some time ago, a very pretty young Lady fell passionately in Love with me, for the ingenious and lively Fancy I express in my manner of Dressing:——May I be struck dumb to Perpetuity, if it ben't true. —I continu'd an Affair with her for some time; but her Passion grew so great, and her Conduct so small, that I was forc'd to decline my Acquaintance; for I swear I should not endure to have any Body think I ever had an Affair with a Woman in my Life:—Well, there's an unspeakable Pleasure in keeping ones Amours a Secret to the World.

Court. within. Prithee *Tom* don't be impertinent, I must go in.

Serv. within. Indeed Mr. *Courtwell*, my Lady gave me strict Orders to keep you out.

Court. within. Indeed, *Tom*, you'll get your Head Broke for your Diligence.

Enter Courtwell.

Court. Madam, I'm your humble Servant—Heyday! what have we here, the Widow between *December* and *July*, courted at once by *Nestor* and *Adonis*,

Wid. What means this base Companion?

Court. Base, Madam! he's not base that fights as high as your Lips—Come, come, put off those melancholy Weeds—Thou hast done virtuously, thou hast strangely griev'd for thy Husband, spent more Tears for his Death, than would serve a whole City of Widows in a Plague-time, besides Sighings and Swoonings not to be credited.

Wid. Am I still to be troubled with your rude Addresses, I thought I had given you an Answer long since.

Will

Will no Denials ſhock thee? What is it thou preſum'ſt on.

Court. On your Judgment, Madam; not to make Choice of yon' walking Hoſpital, or that Butterfly for an Husband; Fools with no more Merit than what conſiſts in lac'd Coats and full Bags; but of an honeſt hearty Fellow, endow'd with Health, Love, Youth and good Nature, which (in no more deform'd Perſon than my ſelf) may deſerve you.

Wid. Was ever ſuch Rudeneſs?

Court. Dear Madam, don't give the Child a wrong Name, term not that Rudeneſs which the *Sages* call true Confidence, founded on the moſt infallible Rock of a Woman's Inconſtancy—In ſhort, Widow, I am reſolv'd to make you happy, in ſpite of all the Reſolutions you have ta'en to the contrary: I can't ſuffer ſuch a delicious Flower to periſh on the Stalk, or be ſavagely pluck'd by by a prophane Finger.

Wid. Well, if ever I forgive this, may I——

Court. O! no more Vows, dear Widow——If I have offended you, let your remorſleſs Chambermaid ſeize on my deſpis'd Body, bind me Hand and Foot, and hurl me——into your Ladyſhip's Bed.

Wid. Well, I proteſt I do more and more admire thee for—

Court. Madam, Ignorance is the Mother of Admiration, know me better, and you'll admire me leſs.

Wid. What would'ſt thou have me know? — Why doſt thou haunt me thus?——

Court. Only Madam, that the *Ætna* of my Sighs, and *Nilus* of my Tears, pour'd forth in your Preſence, might witneſs to you the hot and moiſt Affection of my Heart, and procure ſome Favour from your ſweet Tongue, or your more ſweet Lips, or what elſe your Ladyſhip ſhall eſteem more conducible to your divine Contentment.

Wid. I find thou haſt no Senſe of Shame left, and art not to be mov'd by ill Uſage——Therefore let me beg this as a Favour, that you wou'd give over your importunate Suit, and never ſhock me any more with that impudent hideous Face of thine.

Court.

Court. Come, come, not so despicable neither, Widow:——'Tis true, I don't use Milk, or Almond-Powder to it, but faith 'tis an honest Face tho', that can look against a Storm, or light a Fire at a Widow's Lips:——*Probatum est.* [*Kissing her, she struggling.*

Wid. Poison! Toads and Serpents!

Court. Aromatick Perfumes! Orange-Chips, and Heart-Cherries.

Wid. I never met with any Thing so impudent——He's a charming Fellow, Faith. [*Aside.*

Court. Nor I with any Thing so lovely, and were it Treason to kiss these Lips, I wou'd die in the Sin——Prithee Widow make me thy Husband; thou shalt have swinging Interest for thy Money, tho' the Principal be sunk.

Wid. Husband! Injure not that sacred Title with thy prophane Lips:——Can I e'er think of a second Husband, remembring the first?

Court. But view my Person well. [*Turns about.*] What think you, Does it not promise Heirs and Successors? Faith I love thee heartily——

Wid. Love me! Love my Dog.

Court. That I'm bound to do by the Proverb. [*Hugging her.*

Wid. I'll have you toss'd in a Blanket.

Court. In your Sheets Widow——Content——and you shall be my Tosser——s'Death, what an armful of Provocation is here? [*Still embracing her.*

Wid. Gentlemen, can you stand tamely by, and see a Woman insulted thus by such a base Companion.

Vult. to Sir Amo. Sir, do you speak to him, I am not a Man o'th' Sword; but if he says any Thing I can lay hold on, I promise you to take the Law of him.

Sir Amo. Sir, this Carriage is repugnant to the good Manners which ought——

Court. Sir—— [*Putting on his Hat.*

Sir Amo. Will you take a Pinch of Snuff, Sir. [*Obsequiously.*

Court. Damn your Snuff——D'ye mean to affront me. [*Strikes it in's Face, he stands and sneezes.*

Vult. O fye, Sir! Does this become a Gentleman?

Court.

Court. Do'ſt thou prate, old Touchwood? Another Word, and I'll unſcrue thy moldy Noſe from thy Moth-eaten Face——You think of Matrimony——Prithee go home, old Sapleſs, ask Forgiveneſs for the Sins of thy Youth, and whiſtle to thy Grandchildren.

Vult. Sir, you are unmannerly: I am not ſo Old but I may live to whiſtle to Children of——

Court. Thy Neighbour's begetting, Old *Cent. per Cent.*——But can ſuch an old Raſcal as thou art have the Vanity to——

Vult. Bear witneſs, Madam, bear witneſs, he has call'd me Raſcal; that's *Scandalum Magnatum*, I'll trounce you for that.——Take Notice, I am upon my Preferment, in the Way of Marriage, and you have call'd me Raſcal before my Miſtreſs's Face; that will bear a ſwinging Action.

Sir Amo. If I put up ſo publick an Affront, I ſhall be made the common Anvil of the Town; I muſt draw my Sword to preſerve my Reputation, tho' I drop it immediately; beſides, he may have as little Courage as my ſelf, for I have often known a red Coat cover a Coward: [*Aſide.*] Sir, you muſt give me leave to return your Favour. [*Strikes him, draws, they fight, Sir* Amorous *drops his Sword.*

Sir Amo.——Why ay, this, is like a Man of Honour, now.

Wid. What mean you, Sir, by this Inſolence?——I hope you are not wounded——Well, 'tis a vaſt Pleaſure to have Men fight about one.

Sir Amo. By no other Weapons than your own puiſſant Eyes, againſt which no Poitrel is able to defend the Heart of Man. [*To Wid. aſide.*] I hope, Madam, you will excuſe my Departure; but, dear Lady, let me conjure you not to entertain the leaſt Concern for my ill Fortune; we muſt ſubmit to Fate——The greateſt Generals in the World have met with a Defeat.——Madam, I kiſs your immaculate Hands. Sir, yours. [*Exit.*

Wid. This is very fine! and will redound much to my Reputation.

Vult. [*Creeping from under the Table.*] I am very glad there is no Miſchief done: but I can take my Oath the other

other gave the first Blow——Indeed you did give the Affront, by flinging the Snuff in his Face;——but that is not an Assault:——Therefore I wou'd have you bind him over to the Peace, put him in the Crown-Office, swear an Assault against him: I am a Witness he struck first; and a very little Cost will procure you a Jury that will allow you vast Damages, and I'll take care and manage it? [*Exit.*

Wid. How dare you stay in my Presence after such Insolence. [*Walks about.*

Court. *While from Love's Altars Clouds of Sighs arise,*
In smoaking Incense to adore thy Eyes.
[Drawling.

Wid. Sir, your Poetry is as disagreeable to me as your Company; but if I must be persecuted with the latter, pray speak to me in plain Terms; I hate Verse.

Court. Why then, in plain Terms, I am most damnably in Love with you.

Wid. That's plain enough. But let me tell you, I am——

Court. In Love with me. Ay, ay, I know you are Madam.

Wid. No Sir——But I am sensible you are——

Court. Very handsome—I know that too, Madam;—but, Lord, Madam, you need not be so fond to tell me so however.

Wid. Don't mistake me, Sir——for I think you——

Court. A very clever Fellow altogether, and very fit to be your Lover.

Wid. Pray Sir, give me Leave to speak.

Court. Agreed——But pray leave off Praising me:——Upon my Word, Widow, if you don't, I shall think you too forward.

Wid. Then Sir, I must tell you, I think you have a prodigious Stock of Assurance to intrude thus rudely into my Chamber: and pray tell me, how you dare do thus?

Nec. Ay, Sir, how dare you do thus? how dare you, I say?

Court. Now must I stop this Jade's Mouth.

Nec. Come, Sir, why don't you Answer how you came

came in, and who gave you Leave?——Come, Anſwer, Anſwer, Anſwer, Sir.

Court. If you don't hold your troubleſome Tongue, Mrs. *Powderbox*, I ſhall ſtop your Mouth with half a Piece. [*Aſide to her.*

Nec. Do your worſt, I dare you to't——for I wou'd have you to know, a Woman's Tongue was not made to lie ſtill, and whenever you come here again, pray learn the Manners to——

Court. Pay the Chambermaid's Fees as ſoon as I come in. [*Runs to her, puts Money in her Mouth, ſhe ſtruggles, he kiſſes her.*

Wid. O what do you mean, to murdur us?

Nec. O Madam, he has quite ſtopt my Breath, I am not able to ſpeak a Word more.

Wid. Sir, what have you obſerv'd in my Behaviour at any Time, to encourage you to ſuch Inſolence? Sure you imagine you are in Company with ſome of your leud Creatures.

Court. No; but I am in Company with the moſt diſdainful, affected Coquet in Town; one who has more Vanity than her whole Sex, and as ill-natur'd as an old Maid.

Wid. I find, Sir, you'll oblige me to leave the Room.

Court. No, Madam; but I'll oblige you to ſtay, and take this Opportunity to inform you of my ſincere Thoughts.——Nay, nay, you ſhan't ſtir, till I have held to you a Glaſs wherein you ſhall behold your Follies——I love you, and 'tis my Love which makes me free——I have hitherto born your Scorns with Patience——Indeed, I ever was too much your Friend to flatter you, or I might have receiv'd Favours as great as thoſe Fops that have the Art of tickling your vain Ears with your own Praiſes; for Flattery is your darling Vice.

Wid. O dear! Is it out of Humour then? and does it rail? Ha! ha, ha. Is it angry indeed?

Court. Yes indeed is it, tho' its Pride won't let it own it——Pſha! Pſha! this Mirth is all feign'd!——nothing but Affectation!—I know you perfectly; you are the Reverſe of what you appear——you laugh when you are moſt diſpleas'd, and ſeem moſt Angry when you are

most in Humour——Right Woman 'faith——Ha! the Fan tore——Woman every Inch of her.

Wid. You are come to rail, I find. [*Walking about, he following her.*

Court. You have said true, Madam——You are of so inconstant a Temper, that you break this Minute what the last you resolv'd on: The Wind changes not half so often as your Resolutions.

Wid. Have you done, Sir?

Court. Not half.——I confess you are, are very handsome: Nature has given you a surpassing Beauty, but Pride, Affectation, and Self-conceit, darken with Folly your exterior Charms.

Wid. This Boldness, Sir——

Court. Is not pleasing—I know it is not Madam, and yet 'tis Friendship all.——I wou'd have your Mind as beautiful and attractive as your Face, which is free from the least Defect.——Faith, Widow, I am true, as your Glass, and will shew you all your Graces, with your Imperfections; for tho' I love you, yet I look on you with impartial Eyes.——You are affected, very affected, and I see it; yet love you too.

Wid. This Assurance.

Court. You are Proud too; proud of what you are not sure to possess an Hour, Beauty, which is always withering, 'tis the worst Part of a Woman——

Wid. Pray, Sir, take a little Breath; for by this Time methinks you shou'd want it.

Court. Then for your Reputation——which is but slightly guarded——

Wid. How, Sir——

Court. I say it again, Madam, your Reputation is but slightly guarded; for by your Coquetry you lie open to Scandal, and the Lash of all detracting Tongues, which are ever busie on the least Occasion; the Reputation of a Woman is like that chaste Flower the *Amaranthus*, which is no sooner touch'd, but withers; or a fair chrystal Glass, our very Breath will dull it:——But your Ambition (notwithstanding your Vow against a second Marriage) is to have a Number of Gallants——You are become the Discourse of the Chocolate-House——The young,

young, the beautiful Widow *Outside*, is a Butt for every Fop to aim his Rhetorick at; and will you persevere in your Errors, still be blind to your Mis-conduct?

Wid. You talk as if you were really my Husband;—but I desire you wou'd use these Freedoms where you have more Power.

Court. I hope I have some Influence over you.

Wid. You are mistaken, I assure you, Sir; and however the good Humour I have treated you with (which was more in Respect to your Sister, than any real Esteem for your self,) may have flatter'd you into a false Opinion of my Love; you'll find your self egregiously mistaken——So, Sir, eternally adieu——I never was so provok'd in my Life, and I have a good Mind to marry him, to be reveng'd on him. [*Exit.*

Court. She's gone, and I have lash'd her Vanity till it smarts—I know she loves me, tho' her Affectation wou'd conceal the charming Flame;

'Tis certain she has felt Love's powerful Dart,
Each Look, each Action does confess the smart:
The amorous God his Trophies does display,
And what her Heart wou'd hide, her Eyes betray. [Exit.

The End of the Second ACT.

ACT III. SCENE *a Chamber.*

(Table and Candles.)

Enter Miranda *and* Courtwell.

Mir. AY, marry Brother, this Widow wou'd be a Jewel worth the wearing, if a Man knew how to win her——Well, I'll be your Advocate, and plead your Cause as well as I can, tho' I despair of Success.

Court. Why so, *Miranda?*

Mir. Because Love can no more be carry'd on without

out Money, than a Suit of Law, and you know you have the Curſe of a younger Brother's Fate, and conſequently, muſt ſue in *Forma Pauperis*——My Father, you know, was moſt indulgent to the weakeſt; he has left the Fool my elder Brother a large Eſtate to get him a Wife; I, who am but a homely Girl, a conſiderable Portion to procure me an Husband, and you a ſufficient Wit to make your Fortune.

Court. A very pretty Legacy, Faith. Well, ſince 'tis my all, I muſt put it to the beſt Uſe I can, and that is, I think, to redouble my Attack upon the Widow.

Mir. Might I adviſe, Brother, you ſhou'd raze the Siege, believe me, 'twill be Time loſt:—If there were no other Bar, ſhe is too Rich, too much above you.

Court. There you're out, Sir; young Widows and old Maids, are the only Refuge for younger Brothers. Widows are the only Judges of Man's Fleſh, and have a greater Reſpect to ſomething elſe in a Husband than a Fortune. Look you, *Miranda*; in one Speech, why ſhou'd I deſpair that *Cupid* has one Dart in ſtore for Lady *Outſide*, as well as any other rich Lady, whom he has made to ſtoop to her Cook, her Butler, or her Footman; ſuch Marriages the preſent Age has produc'd, and yet none of 'em been more than a nine Days Wonder. In a Word, I am ſure of Succeſs; ſuch Attempts, purſu'd with Reſolution, are ever ſeconded by Fortune.

Mir. But Brother, do you conſider the Vows ſhe has made againſt a ſecond Marriage?

Court. Womens Vows, like great Mens Promiſes, are often made, but rarely kept: Why, you ſee ſhe is already acceſſible for Suitors; and let me tell you, if once a Woman conſent to parly with her Lover, he may promiſe himſelf a Surrender, depend on't. I have ſet her Heart upon as fickle a Pin as the Needle of a Dial, that will never let it reſt 'till it be in the right Poſition.

Mir. Why do you imagine this?

Court. Becauſe I ſaw *Cupid* ſhoot in my Words, and open his Wounds in her Looks; her Blood went and came of Errants, betwixt her Face and her Heart; and ſuch Changes, I can tell you, are ſhrewd Tell-Tales.

Mir. Your Vanity alone, which miſtakes the Effects

of

of her Resentment for the Symptoms of Love: I know she can't endure you——Besides, such Vows, such Resolutions——

Court. Her Vows are gone to Heav'n with her Husband, they bind not upon Earth; and as for Women's Resolutions, I must tell you, the Planets and the Winds have a great Stroke in 'em, and if they prove not as weak as Wafers, say I have no Skill in the Sex.

Mir. But then such Sorrow, such a continu'd Course of Mourning——

Court. For all this I'll not dispair; I never yet knew a Woman mourn so violently but she dissembled. Experience tells me how short-liv'd Widows Tears are; their weeping is, in Truth, but laughing under a Mask, they mourn in their Gowns, and laugh in their Sleeves; all which I firmly believe, and am resolv'd to die in that Faith. [*Exit.*

Mir. Go thy Ways, and if Confidence have any Influence in Courtship, thou hast enough to promise thee Success with half the Sex—But now for my own Affair with the Colonel; I long to know the Success of the last Embassy, and am impatient till *Betty* return. [*Exit.*

SCENE changes to Col. Manly's *Apartment*; Betty *enters thro' a private Place in the Wainscot, and shuts up the Pannel.*

Bet. So, I have watch'd a good Opportunity; the Colonel and his Servant are abroad, and I am got safely here in the Dark, because no Suspicion may happen by discovering a Light in the Room——Let me see—Where have I put my Mistress's Letter, which I am to leave upon the Table? O Heavens! my eager Hast has made me leave it behind me: Sure I'm not in Love, that I'm so forgetful—'Tis no matter, it lies but in my own Room, I can quickly return with it——Ha! I can't find my Way out again——'Tis so dark, that I don't know whereabouts I am! [*Feeling about for the private Place.*] I have done finely——So, I see a Light, some Body's coming——I find the Train of Discovery has took Fire, and all our Plot will be blown up in a Trice. [Aspin *unlocks the Chamber-Door, and enters with a Candle.*

Asp. Now am I almoſt afraid to enter, leaſt I ſhould meet with ſome of theſe Fairies——*Stands peeping and trembling at the Door.*] Shall I [Betty *hides her ſelf by the ſide Scene.*] venture or no? Hang Fear, 'tis below a Man of my Courage——[*Comes forward a little*; Betty *ſlips behind him, and moves as he does.*

Bet. Now if I can ſee whereabout the private Door is, I'll attempt to blow out the Candle, and whilſt he goes to light it again, I may find an Opportunity to ſlip away; 'tis but venturing, Fear and Neceſſity often make Cowards brave, and give their Courage Succeſs.

Aſp. [*Peeping about.*] I begin to be a little afraid; I wiſh none of theſe Fairies be here inviſible; for methinks the Candle begins to burn blue. [*Walks about the Room, ſtarts at the Table.*] What's that! oh! 'tis the Table——Here's nothing here—[*After he has walk'd about the Room, while ſhe follow'd him, he gets in the middle of the Stage and ſpeaks.*] Hem!——Now my Heart's in my Belly again, and my Courage is return'd—I don't believe, if the Devil himſelf were here (Lord bleſs us) I ſhou'd be afraid——[*She ſtrikes him a Box o'th' Ear.*] Humph! that ſubſtantial Favour cou'd not come from a Thing of Air; it had the full Weight of Fleſh and Blood——[*Turns about and holds up the Candle to her Face*; *ſhe blows it out, juſt at which Col.* Manly *enters.*] What the Devil are you, Madam——Oh the Devil! the Devil! the Devil!

Enter Col. Manly.

Col. Either my Eyes deceiv'd me, or I ſaw the Glimpſe of a Woman as I enter'd——*Aſpin*, what's the Matter.

Aſp. O dear, Sir, are you there?—For Heaven's Sake have a care of your ſelf—Here's a whole Troop of Devils in the Room, beſides a vaſt Tribe of Witches and Fairies.

Col. Prithee be quiet, Blockhead.

Aſp. Dear Sir, make no Words, but ſend immediately for a Parſon. I am bewitch'd! I am poſſeſs'd! The Devil has conjur'd his Flames into my right Ear already.

Bet. Now I ſhall get off. [*She feeling about for the private Place, the Col. lays hold of her.*

Col. Have I caught you? I have laid hold on one

I'm

I'm ſure, and 'tis a Woman. *Aſpin*, run and fetch a Light quickly.

Bet. What ſhall I do?

Aſp. A Woman! the greater Devil than I'm ſure—— Let her go, dear Sir, let her go.

Col. Bring a Candle I ſay——[*Exit* Aſpin.] I find my little Fairy, there's ſome Subſtance in you——I have a ſtrong Inclination to try if you be Fleſh and Blood; the Room is dark, and very fit for the Purpoſe.

Bet. What ſhall I do?——Fortune, ſtand my Friend but now, and I'll never tempt thee ſo again. [*Gives a ſudden Spring out of his Arms.*] I'm free at laſt.

Col. Are you at that Sport, my Dear?——Nay, then I'll ſecure the Door, and if you are a Spirit, you ſhall exert your Power, and vaniſh thro' the Keyhole.

[*Runs to the Door, pulls it too, and holds it faſt.*

Bet. So, now I have found the right Place, and if ever I venture ſo again, I wiſh I may be raviſh'd.

[Betty *goes thro' the private Door, and ſhuts it after her.*

Col. I hear no Body ſtir.

Enter Aſpin *with a Candle.*

Aſp. I have brought a Candle, Sir: Come bring the Fairy to the Light; I can look at her with more Pleaſure now ſhe's a Priſoner, than I felt her a little while ago——Maſter, we'll ſwear ſhe's a Witch, and have her burnt——Where is ſhe, Sir? [*Looking about.*

Col. Where is ſhe?——Why, in the Room I think.

Aſp. [*Looking about the Room.*] I can't ſee her, Sir; but perhaps ſhe may have conjur'd a Miſt before my Eyes, for I can't perceive the leaſt Glimpſe of any Body but your ſelf——Why, you have not got hold of her now, have you Maſter?

Col. Got hold of the Devil, you Blockhead——How is it poſſible ſhe ſhou'd get away?——I am certain I ſecur'd the Door. Surely ſhe deals with the Devil.

Aſp. I warrant ſhe does, and he has carry'd her away in a Whirlwind.

Col. I am diſtracted till ſhe's found.

Aſp. Then Sir, 'twill be a long Time before you recover your Senſes.

Col.

Col. 'Sdeath to be thus out-witted by a Woman! I'll find her out I'm resolv'd.

Asp. Ah! Sir, don't be too curious, it may be very fatal to us; for Spirits, like Statesmen, don't care that ordinary Persons shou'd pry too much into their Secrets.

Col. This Fellow is as fearful at Thirty, as a raw Boy that is bred up with an old Grandmother, and had his Education only amongst Women——I'll employ one Hour more of this Night, I'm resolv'd, to make the Discovery. Come along Trembler. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE changes to the Widow's Lodgings. Table and Candles.

Enter Clarinda *and the* Widow.

Wid. Nay, dear Cousin, tell me what you have met with, since you have been with *Miranda*, to occasion this sudden Uneasiness? I am sorry you have so mean an Opinion of my Friendship or Sincerity, to refuse acquainting me with this Cause of your Tears.

Clar. Dear Cousin forgive me; and if your Patience will permit, you shall know the Cause of 'em——You are sensible, that before my Father dy'd, his Extravagance had consum'd the greatest Share of his Patrimony, and left me only with two hundred Pounds to the Care of my Uncle, who quickly deny'd me the Protection of his House; and turn'd me out a Prey unto Misfortune.

Wid. This I have heard, and often wonder'd at my Uncle's Barbarity.

Clar. The Fault was mine, and 'tis severely punish'd. Know that wicked Man, Sir *Amorous Vainwit*, came down with a Relation of my Uncle's to his House in *Wiltshire*, where I then resided——My Beauty tempted him to betray my Innocence:——He had not been many Days before he made known his Passion——I then being young, unknowing in the subtil Wiles of Men, with Pleasure hearken'd to his Love: He soon perceiv'd his Conquest, and made a stronger Application: At length his Oaths and Vows so won upon my Heart——I blush to tell the rest.

Wid. Wicked Man!

Clar.

Clar. After he had ſubdu'd my Virtue, his Occaſions preſs'd him up to *London*. He left me, but with ſtrong Aſſurances of Marriage——Six Months were paſs'd without e'er hearing from him:—But then, the Puniſhment of guilty Love I cou'd conceal no longer——My Aunt made me confeſs the whole Affair;——but ſtill conceal'd it from my Uncle's Knowledge, till I was brought to bed of a fair Boy, the Witneſs of his unhappy Mother's Shame; then my cruel Uncle ſhow'r'd on me all his Rage, and ſoon as I was able, turn'd me from his Houſe.

Wid. Poor *Clarinda.*

Clar. I then came up to Town——My Boy, Heaven was pleas'd to take——I found out Sir *Amorous*; but he, to add to my Afflictions, when I expected Pity and Redreſs, deſpis'd and ſcorn'd me; and while I was drinking Tea with *Miranda* this Afternoon, her Brother, Mr. *Courtwell*, propos'd him to her for a Husband——You may be ſure this alarm'd me; for ſhou'd he marry, then all my Hopes of Help from him were loſt, and I ſhould be abandon'd to the utmoſt Shame and Poverty.

Wid. I am not ſo much ſurpriz'd at the Ingratitude of Mankind, who generally return with Neglect the higheſt Obligations of our Sex, as that after ſo many Examples of their Perfidy, we ſhou'd ever confide in their falſe Oaths, and Promiſes, and purchaſe Contempt at the Expence of our Virtue and Fame——But, dear Couſin, I cannot expreſs my Concern for your Misfortunes; I wou'd adviſe you quickly to make *Miranda* acquainted with your Story. She's good-natur'd, and will contrive ſome Means for your Redreſs.

Clar. I have already—I waited till her Brother went away, and told her all—Her tender Heart was mov'd; ſhe promis'd me her Aid, bid me have Hope, for that ſhe wou'd engage I ſhou'd marry him before I went to Bed; but how that's poſſible I can't conceive. However, ſhe aſſur'd me, it ſhou'd be ſo; and has order'd me to be with her by Eight o Clock.

Wid. This is ſurprizing! 'Tis now after Six—I ſuppoſe ſhe'll not go out to Night, ſo Couſin, I'll go to her Apartment, pay her a Viſit by my ſelf, and encourage her to proceed in your Cauſe. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE changes to Col. Manley's *Lodgings.*

Enter Colonel *and* Aſpin.

Col. I wonder that no body appears yet.

Aſp. Heav'n ſend they mayn't, for if they ſhou'd, they'd make my Hair briſtle up an End like a Turkey-Cock's Tail.

Col. What ſtill repeating the ſame fearful Tune.

Aſp. Ay, Sir, if you call it ſo; but Fear makes very dull Muſick; the Sound of ſuch another Box on the Ear, wou'd reduce it to nothing but Diſcord. Methinks, tho' I have no great Skill, 'tis like touching the Strings too harſhly.

Col. Come, no more of your Nonſenſe.

Enter Miranda *thro' the private Door, with a Dark-Lanthorn in her Hand.*

Col. I fancy, I hear ſome body tread.

Aſp. O Lord! no ſure! Maſter, pray let me fetch a Candle.

Col. You talk like a Blockhead: We are likely to make a Diſcovery of any Thing with a Light.

Aſp. I know what my Maſter talks like——if I durſt tell him, to ſuppoſe we can make a Diſcovery of any Thing without. O Lord! yes, I beg his Pardon, now I think on't, a Woman may be diſcover'd in the Dark.

Mir. I'll ſtay here, and write my *Billet-deux.* Well, now I'm pretty ſafe; but I run as many Dangers as a romantick Knight in an enchanted Caſtle, and Love has made me full as ridiculous——I have juſt Reaſon enough to know I act againſt Reaſon, elſe why ſhou'd I be ſo induſtrious to declare my Paſſion to the Man, and at the ſame Time, ſo deſirous to conceal my Perſon from his Knowledge: Certainly, I am actuated by that little Deity, *Cupid*, who ſports himſelf in the whimſical Actions of us Mortals.

Aſp. I fancy I heard ſomething mention Enchantment juſt now. I am afraid the Devil is in the Room, for I begin to ſmell Brimſtone——Pray, Sir, let us go down Stairs, for if we ſtay in this Room much longer, we ſhall be both frighted out of our Wits.

Col

Col. Come this Way: If I am not mistaken, I heard some body in the Room.

Asp. Dear Sir, don't let us venture thus in the Dark, for the Fairies may have some evil Design upon us; besides, it looks very much like the Sin of Presumption.

Col. Tread softly, and don't give the Enemy Notice of our Approach.

Asp. Lord, Sir, I am just ready to beat an Alarm with my Teeth.

Col. Hold your Tongue, you Son of a Whore, and keep your Teeth together, or I'll cut one out, and beat the other down your Throat.

Asp. Pray, Sir, let me fetch a Light.

Mir. So, here's the Table. Now for a Dispatch of Business. [*Sits down, opens the Lanthorn and writes.*

Col. You may spare your self the Trouble; for see, you no sooner desire a Light, but you have one.

Asp. O Lord! what do I see?——There's the Devil in *Propria Persona*——Master, dear Sir, have you never an Errand to send me of?——O Lord, O Lord! my Heart beats a March to my Heels.

Col. I'll beat your Brains out, if you don't make your Heart and your Heels agree.

Asp. Lord, Sir, you quite mistake the whole Matter, they are agreed upon going, and only want you to give the Word.

Col. Sirrah, hold your Tongue.

Asp. You need not bid me, for Fear has made me so dry in my Mouth, that my Tongue is almost become useless; but if you don't make haste, my Teeth will quickly do the Office of my Tongue, and tell her how my Heart beats. O! a Ghost! an Apparition! A Parson, a Parson! fetch a Parson quickly! [*Colonel goes behind the Table, takes up the Lanthorn, and claps hold of* Miranda.

Mir. I am betray'd!

Col. Stand away Blockhead——Have I caught you, Madam? I'll take Care you shan't slip thro' my Hands again. [*Looks on her.*] Ha! methink I ne'er saw one so beautiful before——What means this Palpitation at my Heart——'Tis so; she's some Divinity come down from Heav'n

Heav'n to bless me, and I have offended her with my Rashness. [*Gazing at her.*

Asp. So; now will my Master be for committing Fornication with a Witch.

Mir. I find I have some Influence over him; at least, the Vanity of my Sex tells me so:—Heaven send it may be true——My Hand is in the Lion's Mouth, and I must pull it very gently out to make my Escape.

Col. What a sudden Invasion have her Charms made on my Heart?

Asp. How earnestly my Master stares on this gay Shadow? 'Tis no more I'm sure; for I'll warrant it will vanish presently.

Col. Madam, who you are I know not, nor can I remember I ever saw you before——But what you are, Angel nor Goddess are Terms great enough to express—therefore pray inform me of the one, whilst I admire at the other.

Mir. Sir, your Stile is very courtly, and more perhaps than the Subject deserves; but I esteem it as it is, a Compliment; tho' to answer you plainly who I am, be assur'd I am a Woman of no mean Fortune or Extraction——and what I am you may judge:——I am your Prisoner at present——So leave you to determine.

Asp. That you may do presently, Sir, Look but a little nearer to her——Notwithstanding she's so beautiful, I warrant she has cloven Feet underneath.

Col. Impudent Blockhead be gone! [*Strikes him.*

Asp. With all my Heart; for I never was so weary of my Company before. [*Exit.*

Col. Now, Madam, shall I have the Happiness to know your Name.

Mir. Let what I have told you suffice at present: Be like a Soldier of Honour, trust me upon my Parole, and you shall hear farther from me in Half an Hour. Be satisfy'd I am a Woman of Reputation, tho' my present Conduct may have brought it into Suspicion, and I expect you wou'd treat me as becomes a Gentleman, and one whom I esteem, as you may suppose.

Col. Nay, nay, my Dear; now I find you are a Mortal

tal I shan't part with you, but upon very advantageous Conditions.

Mir. Then I am lost again—O for a Stratagem!—Now all the Invention, Craft, Subtilty of my Sex assist—Sir, I beg you to release me now, and in Requital of your Generosity, come but into the Piazza of *Covent-Garden* in Half an Hour, there shall a Chair wait for you, and bring you where I dare own my self with Honour, and, I hope, to both our Satisfactions.

Col. Pardon me, Madam; I dare not take your Word; that wou'd be like venturing all my Treasure to Sea in a Storm.

Mir. What do you intend to do with me, Sir?

Col. To love you.

Mir. And not obey me!

Col. Obedience in a Lover is as Romantic as Constancy. Besides, I know you are a Woman of more Sense, than to expect it in such an Affair as this.

Mir. Stratagem is the peculiar Wisdom of our Sex: But to answer you in your own Profession, since you refuse to admit of a Truce, I must take other Methods, and compel you to it. Behold this Mark upon my Hand, and then detain me if you can. [*Takes a Pinch of Snuff out of her Box secretly. She holds up her Hand, he comes to look at it, she blows the Snuff in his Eyes, he stamps, drops the Lanthorn, which she takes up, turns the dark Side, and escapes thro' the secret Place.*

Col. Zoons! She has put my Eyes out. *Aspin*, a Light quickly, a Light you Dog!

Enter Aspin *with a Candle.*

Asp. So, I thought what it wou'd come to——is the Fairy gone, Sir?

Col. Gone! yes; and has almost blinded me with blowing Snuff in my Eyes.

Asp. No, no Master: I warrant you it was Brimstone.

Col. Did not you meet her?

Asp. If I did, it was invisible: but I believe I might; for as I was coming hastily in, the Candle had like to have been blown out, and I believe it was she whisking by me in a Whirlwind.

Col. Twice together to be out-witted thus.

Asp. What better can you expect by keeping such Diabolical Company?

Col. We are in a Dream sure, and Fancy plagues us with a fantastick Form.

Asp. As to its being fantastick, 'tis the Form of a Woman, and therefore no Wonder; but I believe we shall be the first that ever dreamt when we were broad awake.

Col. What's here? [*Takes the Letter off the Table.* Reads,

Sir, *I begin to be tir'd with the Pranks I have play'd you; therefore lest I should bring my Honour into Suspicion, I think it Time to discover my self. If you will be in the Piazza in* Covent-Garden *this Evening, their shall be a Chair.*

But what shou'd follow?——Why certainly what she told me——This Intrigue, the nigher it draws to a Discovery, appears the more Intricate. I'll venture however, and never give over till I have dissolv'd this Charm.

Like Woman, I'll invent, till Means are found,
With equal Craft this Riddle to expound. [Exeunt.

The End of the Third ACT.

ACT IV.

Enter Lady Outside, *and* Miranda, *perusing a Letter.*

Mir.
HOW excellent is the Stile! such soft, such easie Language! as if the Quill that wrote it had been pluck'd from *Cupid*'s Wing.

Wid. But prithee, dear *Miranda*, what do you design to do with this Colonel?

Mir. Why, I intend after seizing him a little more, to discover my self to him.

Wid

Wid. What do you mean by that?

Mir. Why, he's a Man of more Wit than to be impos'd on so much longer; therefore I had rather the Discovery shou'd be owing to my Generosity, than his Genius. Besides, the Design begins to have so little Variety in it, that it's no longer agreeable; and tho' I was fond of it at first, as our Sex is of a new Fashion; so after two or three Times, the Delight of it is gone, and now I'd bring it to a Conclusion.

Wid. If an Amour grows disagreeable, what will a Husband do?

Mir. Perhaps the same: Tho' the Variety of our Tempers may take off the dull Notes of Matrimony. But, Madam, I want to have a little serious Discourse with you; I wou'd very fain make a Sister-in-Law of you.

Wid. Sure you take me to be as mad as your self.

Mir. Why not?——Come, I'll venture first into the Road of Matrimony, and then it will be easie for you to follow my Tracks.

Wid. Whether the Colonel will have you, or no?

Mir. I'd fain see a handsom Fellow of his Wit and Station, that wou'd refuse a pretty young Lady with a good Fortune; but if you wou'd not have me beat the Path for you, I'll take Care when my Brother comes next, that you shall do it for me.

Enter Courtwell.

And here he comes, in the critical Minute too, I hope. Brother, I have been pleading your Cause to my Lady *Outside*; but I'm afraid I shan't prove a successful Advocate, considering a younger Brother's my Client, and a rich Widow the Judge: Fortune is grown the best Orator in Love.

Court. You are in the right, Sister: Jointure and Pin-Money have clearly got the better of Merit and Affection; but I'll never repine at that; for fine Women, like great Tables, tho' they are maintain'd by Men of Fortunes, are ever open to Men of Parts.

Wid. The Women are ever sure of your good Word, Mr. *Courtwell*; when you have a Mistress, I hope she'll deserve it from you in particular, and have in Perfection

all those good Qualities you so liberally bestow upon the whole Sex in your Discourses.

Court. Why, Madam, I thought you had understood Raillery better; this is only the Way of Talking I have got among my Companions, where, when we meet over a Bottle, 'tis held as great a Part of Wit to rally Women handsomely behind their Backs, as to flatter them to their Faces.

Mir. I find 'tis Time for me to withdraw. In these Sort of Engagements, a third Person is wholly unnecessary. [*Exit.*

Wid. But why do you make us poor Women the Subject of your Mirth? Why are we so barbarously treated by you?

Court. Because you are so uncharitable, so hard-hearted, and are encompass'd with so many Difficulties, as Decency, Honour, and Reputation, that the Men that love their Pleasure, begin to hate you worse than Beggars do a Coach with the Glasses drawn up, despair of Relief, and fall a Railing.

Wid. But pray Mr. *Courtwell*, to what kind Saint do we owe your Conversion?

Court. You are very forgetful sure: How often have my Eyes told you, when my Tongue durst not, the Pains you gave my Heart: Need I tell you any more, 'tis your fair self I love. I have lost the Pleasure of Mirth, of Wine, and Company, all Things that were before delightful to me, are no longer so. My Life is grown but one continu'd Thought of your fair self?

Wid. Come, leave your Fooling. I think your old Humour does better with you a thousand Times than this whining Love?

Court. Why here 'tis now, there are so many Cheats in this Trade of Love too, that, like Beggars, the true go unreliev'd, because we meet with now and then a Counterfeit; but faith Madam I wou'd not trouble you, cou'd my Pain admit of Redress from any but your self.

Wid. Sure, Mr. *Courtwell*, you wou'd think I had an excellent Opinion of my self, or an implicit Faith in whatever you say, shou'd I believe all this now.

Court.

Court. If I told a Surgeon I had broke my Leg, d'you think he wou'd not take my Word?

Wid. Yes ſure.

Court. Why ſhou'd not you take it then for a wounded Heart? They are neither of 'em Matters to brag of; and I wou'd no more lead the Life of a Lover if I were free, than I wou'd that of a ſick Man if I were well.

Wid. Methinks the ſick Men, as you call them, look ſo like the well, that one can ſcarce know one from the other.

Court. In your Chamber perhaps; but abroad we find a thouſand Differences.

Wid. As how I pray?

Court. Why your true Lover leaves all Company when the Mirth begins, the Table when the Bottles are call'd for, the Gaming-Houſe when the Cards come up; is more afraid of an Engagement than a Lawyer in Term-Time; wou'd leſs miſs the laſt Act of a Play, the Park, or indeed, any abominable old Lady's, where he may hope to ſee the Party, than a Citizen's young Daughter wou'd *Gray's-Inn-Walks* the firſt Sunday of her new Gown.

Wid. And will you be ſuch an Animal for my ſake?

Court. Faith I am already; but if not well us'd, I ſhall find the way home again.

Wid. Whatever you think, Sir, I ſhall contribute no more to the keeping you my Servant, than I did to the making you ſo.

Court. Well, do but uſe as proper Means to keep me your Servant, as you did to make me ſo, and I am ſatisfy'd.

Wid. Why, what Means?

Court. As your Beauty bred my Affection, ſo let your Kindneſs nouriſh it.

Wid. Why, I am tender-hearted, *Courtwell*; but then you have been ſuch an inconſtant——

Court. Oh Madam, your right Lover, like your true bred Spaniel, will range; 'tis only a Proof of his high Mettle; but when his lawful Game's before him, down, down——

Wid. Ay, down——down——indeed, when his lawful Game's before him; but in my Opinion, that's not so commendable a Quality in a Lover, whatever it be in a Spaniel.

Court. O what untoward Suspicions these Widows have.

Wid. But let me see, what may I expect if I consent to be your Wife?——I must board half a Year with a Friend in the Country, tumble about the other half in most villainous Hackneys, see you when you have no Money to play, and then be kiss'd out of a Ring or a Bracelet.

Court. I wou'd not use a City-Widow of Five and Fifty so, with Seven small Children: Do but Consent, Madam, and I'll this Minute send for a Parson and a License, for fear you shou'd change your Resolution.

Wid. Hold, hold, *Courtwell*——My Heart fails me.

Court. 'Sheart, I had a Qualm two: There's certainly a more than ordinary Providence attends me——I shall 'scape yet: I am now in a Twitter, like a Gamester upon a great Bet, that is heartily afraid he should lose it, and yet his Love to the Money won't suffer him to draw Stakes——Well, I must have her.

Wid. Indeed you won't——I have consider'd better on't——Your humble Servant. [*Exit.*

Court. Heyday! Certainly there's nothing in the Creation so fantastical as a Woman——There's no Hopes of Success, I find, by a regular Siege, so I'll e'en employ my Force another way, and take the Citadel by Surprize; and here comes one that may be a very proper Instrument, I must endeavour to bribe her to my Interest: In these Cases, there's nothing like a Friend within the Walls.

Enter Necessary.

Nec. I ask your Pardon, Sir, I thought my Lady had been here. [*Going*

Court. Hold, pretty Mrs. *Necessary*——I must have a Word or two with you.

Nec. I shou'd be glad to do you any Pleasure, and shall always be ready whenever you please to make use of me.

Court

Court. Faith, my Dear, you are very pretty, [*Kisses her.*] 'Sdeath how wantonly her Eyes talk? [*Aside.*

Nec. Lard, you are the ſtrangeſt Man—Is this all your Buſineſs?

Court. No, my Dear, I want to have a little Diſcourſe with you about your Lady.

Nec. Look you, Sir, Lawyers and Chamber-Maids, like *Balaam's* Aſs, never ſpeak unleſs they ſee an Angel.

Court. Wiſely obſerv'd. There's your Fee. [*Gives her Money.*

Nec. Ay, marry, Sir, this is ſomewhat, but to plead a Cauſe in *Forma Pauperis*, is the Devil.

Court. Well, Mrs. *Neceſſary*, I muſt have your Aſſiſtance this Night in a Deſign which I have laid to carry your Lady; in which, if I ſucceed, I'll make thoſe two Guineas two hundred.

Nec. Ay, marry Sir, this is bidding like a Gentleman indeed; you may depend upon my Aſſiſtance: Two hundred ſuch Angels as theſe will tempt a Woman even to keep a Secret——Well, you Men are ſtrange Creatures when you are ſet upon a Thing; you ſtick at nothing to compaſs your Deſign; Lying, Perjury, Bribery, and what not——Nay, o'my Conſcience, I believe you'd raiſe the Devil to obtain a Circle. [*A Bell rings.*] Hark, my Lady rings! I can't ſtay to conſult with you now.

Court. Meet me below Stairs a quarter of an Hour hence.

Nec. I will, I will. Farewell. [*Exeunt ſeverally.*

SCENE Covent-Garden.

Enter Col. Manly.

Col. I am afraid my little Riddle has jilted me again: I have waited this half Hour, and no Appearance of a Chair.

Enter two Chair-Men with a Chair.

Chair. Hiſt! hiſt! If your Name be *Manly*, get into this Chair, and ask no farther Queſtions.

Col. Now certainly the Diſcovery draws near. I wiſh at laſt the Riddle proves worth the Trouble of expounding. Certainly ſhe can't be a common Woman, by the

the Caution she takes of preserving her Reputation. Well, for once I'll indulge my Curiosity, tho' it bring me to an old Woman, or what's e'en as bad, an old Acquaintance. [*Gets in.*

Chair. Push on, *Jack*, push on. [*Exeunt with Chair.*

SCENE a Chamber.

Enter Sir Amorous Vainwit, *reading a Letter.*

Sir Amo. Rivet me to the Center, if this is not superlatively fortunate; I cou'd contemplate on these Lines to Perpetuity.

Reads,

Sir, *I am confirm'd you have Wit and Good-Nature enough to forgive this uncommon Method I have taken to divulge my Passion; the Effect of your own Charms, which I think as impossible for any Woman to see, and not admire, as to love you, and not declare it. The Condition I am in makes me thus free: I am a Woman of a considerable Fortune, and in my own Hands; but have a Brother who takes the Privilege of his Sex to confine me, being of a Nature so jealous, that he believes Virtue cannot guard it self. I have said enough to let you know I should be glad of my Freedom, which I doubt not but your Wit can easily effect; and if you think my Person and Fortune a Reward, you may trust to your own Charms for your Security. If you will go immediately into the Piazza, there shall be a Chair to conduct you to me. Yours,*

SILVIA.

This is an Intrigue indeed, and worth the following—Egad the Women are strangely taken with this Person of mine. I believe I must marry at last in my own Defence—Sirrah, if I am not at Home by Twelve, you need not expect me. Now for *Silvia*.

SCENE Miranda's *Chamber.*

Enter Betty, *leading in Col.* Manly.

Bet. Stay here a while, and I, or better Company will wait on you immediately. [*Exit Col*

Col. So, I h . travell'd a fine Way to Night, thro' all the Allies, Lanes, and By-ways in Town——I am brought here to wait on my little Fairy, and for ought I know I may be in the World in the Moon, only Darkneſs ſeems a Contradiction to that——Pray Heav'n, where ever I am, it may prove an Orb of Happineſs, and that this Adventure may end as well as it begun, in a pleaſant Intrigue with a fair young Lady. [*Singing within.*] What do I hear?——Nay, now I believe I am in a Region among the Deities indeed, and this Muſick is a Preparation for the thrilling Pleaſures I am brought here to enjoy——Methinks they ſtay too long——Now am I fluſh'd with Expectation of my approaching Bliſs——I dare not peep, for fear of being expell'd my *Eden* for ſearching after too much Knowledge——Soft a little! the dark Scene of Mortality opens, and my charming Spirit appears in her little Paradiſe.

Enter Miranda *and* Betty *with Candles.*

So! in what Syllables ſhall I accoſt her? What a Pox! Have I ne'er a Speech out of a Play to complement her? Then her Beauty muſt inſpire me with ſome *Extempore* Poetry I think.

Mir. Is not your Patience tir'd, Sir?

Col. No, Madam:

As Rural Swains expecting wait the Dawn,
And view with Gladneſs the approaching Morn;
So at your Radiant Charms, inſpir'd I gaze,
Chear'd by your Eyes, like bright Aurora's *Rays.*

Mir. Sir, inſtead of returning ſo courtly a Compliment in the ſame Poetick Strain, I have at preſent ſo little of the Vanity of my Sex, as to be offended at your Flattery; for you have neither the Conſtancy of a Rural Swain, nor my Eyes the Brightneſs of *Aurora*'s Rays; therefore your Words ſpeak rather the Panegyrick of a Poet, than the Plain-dealing of a Soldier.

Col. Madam, what I have ſaid is Truth, and therefore no Flattery; and as for my Conſtancy, I have had a continual Fit of it ever ſince I ſaw you; and for your Charms, they are brighter than *Aurora* in my Eyes, and

I am as little skill'd in the Art of Flattery, as your Beauty is above the Reach of it.

Mir. Nay, now your Genius soars so high, that I assure you my humble Wit cannot come up to it with an Answer.

Col. Nor mine, Madam, to return your Raillery at present, but pray what Usage am I to expect?

Mir. The same which you intended half an Hour ago for me, Sir.

Col. Faith, with all my Heart, Madam: I am glad to hear it. Come let's retire then. [*Knocking without.*

Mir. I am betray'd! 'tis my Brother——Sir, I beg you'd hide your self or I'm undone.

Col. Hide my self! yes truly, 'tis very likely I shou'd and not know where I am—A Pox on my unlucky Fortune.

Mir. Hark! they knock again!——*Betty*, conduct him to my Closet in my Dressing-Room. [*Ex.* Betty *and* Col. So, now he's gone, I'm safe——Well, an Intrigue requires as much Policy to keep it from being found out, as a Conspiracy: The least contrary Motion disorders the whole Frame of it, and brings it to the very Brink of Discovery.

Enter Sir Amorous *and* Betty.

Betty. This is my Lady, Sir.

Sir Amo. Strike me crooked if she is not a most Angelick Creature. Madam, may I have Leave to hope these Lines were wrote by the fair Hands of so superlative a Beauty? He! Madam.

Mir. Sir, they were——and I hope you will interpret——Be pleas'd to sit——I say Sir——

Sir Amo. Madam!——

Mir. I say Sir, my Conduct in this Affair may prejudice my Reputation in your Opinion: Therefore my present Task must be to justify that, before I can pretend to a Place in the Heart of so accomplish'd a Gentleman which, I must with blushing own, I shou'd esteem my greatest Happiness.

Sir Amo. O Gad, Madam, you confound me with your supererogatory Indulgence; tho', at the same Time I must say, your Manner of Proceeding is very Novel but

but had my Eyes before this Time been bleſt with the benign Proſpect of your invincible Charms, your Beauty wou'd not have only ſav'd your Bluſhes upon this Occaſion, but inſpir'd my Tongue with all the Efficacy of moving Eloquence to beg with Importunity the profer'd Bleſſing.

Mir. I thank you, for your kind Indulgence of my Paſſion: even Flattery in Love is welcome: But, Sir, that my Reputation is yet unſully'd, let this declare: I am a Widow, my Husband was an *India* Merchant, where, about three Years ſince, he dy'd, but not before he had acquir'd an Eſtate of Two Thouſand Pounds a Year, of which he left me ſole Miſtreſs, with the Addition of Fifteen Thouſand Pounds; the ſtrong Affection I had for my Native Country, ſoon after my Husband's Death, brought me to *England*, where, ever ſince, my Brother has uſurp'd a Power of confining me, making this Houſe my Priſon, under a Pretence to prevent my marrying to a Diſadvantage; but rather, I believe (by his barbarous Uſage) to drive me into Deſpair, that he may the eaſier become Maſter of my Fortune: He is ſo jealous of me, that it wou'd be immediate Death for any Man to look at me with the leaſt Deſire of any farther Intimacy.

Sir Amo. I hope, Madam, he's not in the Houſe now——Not that I ſhou'd fear an Army of Brothers in ſuch a Cauſe——Your Beauty wou'd give Succeſs to my Endeavours, and egad, Madam, I fence as well as any Man in *Europe*.

Mir. No, Sir, he's out of Town, and won't come Home to Night. My Servant he has made my Keeper; but I have brib'd her to my Intereſt——Now, Sir, give me leave to proceed, for Time is precious, and my Deſire of Liberty gives my Tongue this Boldneſs——I ſaw you on *Sunday* at St. *James's* Church, when your Charms, like ſubtle Lightning flaſht thro' my Eyes, and took Poſſeſſion of my Heart; ever ſince I have been contriving to make known my Paſſion to you, and obtain a happy Interview; which, by the Force of my own Inclination, and my Servant's Avarice, I have this Night accompliſh'd——Your Manner of being brought

here

here was merely Political, that if you refus'd my melting Heart its Wishes, my Reputation might be safe, and you return'd the same Way you came.

Sir Amo. Egad she'd make an excellent City Wife—— one wou'd think she had been brought up in *Spain* or *Portugal* by her secure Manner of Intriguing. [*Aside.*

Mir. Now, Sir, if you think me worthy to be your Wife (I must speak it) procure me my Liberty this Night; I have both a License and a Parson ready in the House, and my Maids will be Witnesses.

Sir Amo. This is something extraordinary. She may be a Bite faith. [*Aside.*] Why really, Madam, Marriage is a Thing I have not much thought of as yet; not but that I shou'd conclude my self infinitely happy in the Possession of so fine a Woman——But——

Mir. Come, Sir, perhaps you may think this some Imposition on you, but I'll quickly remove that doubt—— There, Sir, accept these Bills: they are from the Bank, and worth Ten Thousand Pounds, only an Earnest of the Fortune you may command. [*Gives him Bills.*

Sir Amo. Ha! egad they're right. Pray Heav'n this mayn't prove a Dream at last. Faith I can hardly credit my Senses. [*Aside.*

Mir. You seem surpriz'd, Sir. What new Objection?

Sir Amo. Objection, Madam! none cou'd be excogitated after so consummate a Proof of Love and Merit; and if any Disorder is perceptible in my Looks, it proceeds from a pusilanimous Apprehension of any cross Accident that a malevolent Fate shou'd produce, to exclude me from the Heaven of your Embraces.

Mir. Then Sir, be pleas'd to secure them Bills in your Pocket-Book. [*Putting the Bills in his Book.*

Sir Amo. This is a most prodigious Adventure, and notwithstanding all my Vanity and Boasting, I never knew any Woman before that had Sense enough to be commonly civil to me: Therefore I'll take Fortune by the Hand while she's in this smiling Humour, marry the Lady this Minute, and publish my Success over the whole Town before to morrow Morning——Her Fortune I am sure of, her Beauty is invincible, and her Understanding is conspicuous, in chusing me for a Husband——

pind——Dear Charmer, you must indulge the Importunity of a Passion, which the Corruscation of your own fair Eyes have created, and your melifluous Tongue confirm'd: You must consent to make me happy this Night! this Hour! this Minute! My Soul pants for the Extatick Bliss.

Mir. This Rapture blows my Passion to a Flame; your Words are no less charming to my Ears, than your Beauty to my Eyes.

Enter Betty.

Betty. O Madam! Madam! my Master's come to Town, and just coming up Stairs.

Mir. My Brother! O Heav'n! what an unlucky Accident's this? What will you do, Sir?

Sir Amo. Lord, Madam, I am the dullest Dog at contriving in the World——but, if you please, Madam, I'll jump out at the Window.

Mir. That were to endanger your precious Life——*Betty* step into the Closet, there is a Night-Gown and Petticoat of mine, fetch it out, and put it upon him——[*Exit* Betty.] You must consent to this Disguise, for if my Brother sees you, you're certainly a dead Man.

Enter Betty *with the Cloaths.*

Betty. Here, Sir, be pleas'd to put on the Petticoat.

[*Dresses him.*

Sir Amo. Sure I am the most unlucky Dog upon the Earth! I am damnably afraid my good Fortune will conclude in a Cudgelling.

Betty. So, Sir, now the Gown.

Sir Amo. Well, I was never made for intriguing, that's certain. I have neither a Head to contrive an Escape, nor a Heart to justifie a Discovery: Nay, what vexes me most, I am so curs'd a Coward, that I am not to be kick'd into a little Courage.

Betty. Now, Sir, for the Headcloaths. I vow you'll make a pretty Sort of a Lass.

Mir. Hark! I hear my Brother coming. Say any Thing to bring your self off.

Enter the Butler *dress'd like a Gentleman, booted.*

But. So, Sister, have you supp'd?

Mir. No, Brother; nor I have not order'd any Thing,

becauſe you told me you ſhou'd ſtay at *Hampton-Court* all Night.

But. So I had, but Sir *John* and his Brother ſent an Excuſe for their not coming, ſo I e'en came Home to Night. How now! who is this Woman?

Sir Amo. Sir, I came about a little Buſineſs to my young Lady.

But. No Perſon can have Buſineſs with my Siſter, who does not think fit to acquaint me with it. What are you, Woman?

Sir Amo. Pray Sir don't be in a Paſſion. I am——I am, you muſt know I don't know what the Devil to ſay to him. My Fear puts a Stop to my wonted Capacity of Lying. [*Aſide.*

But. I ask you, Woman, what you are?

Sir Amo. Why Sir, I am a Midwife.

But. A Midwife! what Buſineſs can my Siſter have with a Midwife?

Sir Amo. O Lord! that's true——What a damnable Thought was that? I might as well have ſaid I was a Fiſh-Wife——I ſhall certainly be diſcover'd. [*Aſide.*

But. A Midwife! impoſſible! But Zoons, tell me what you are, or——

Sir Amo. O dear Sir, you'll put me into Fits if you ſtorm at this rate;——but excrutiate me Sir if——

But. Excrutiate the Devil——

Sir Amo. Upon the Veracity of a Gentlema—Woman I am really and categorically a Midwife.

But. A Midwife! no, rather one to prepare Work for a Midwife, a Pimp, a Pander! O Siſter, Siſter, is this the Care you have of your Honour? Do Women uſe to wear Mens Shoes? But I'll reward this Meſſenger of Lewdneſs?—— [*Beats him*

Sir Amo. O help! Murder! Murder! Is this Uſage for a Gentleman—Help! help! the Devil take the hindmoſt. [*Runs off*

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! This is a pretty ſevere Puniſhment upon the Fool. I aſſure you *Tom*, you have perform'd your Part very well.

But. Your humble Servant, Madam. I am glad it was in my Power to ſerve you; but indeed, to tell you the

he Truth, Madam, I always go about Miſchief with a good Will——My Father was a Pettyfogger, and I have a natural Inclination to it.

Mir. Betty, you muſt go into the next Room, and purſue the Adventure, while I prepare *Clarinda* for the Marriage. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Sir Amorous *in the Balcony.*

Sir Amo. So, I have at laſt found out a Balcony—— Ha! 'tis to the Street; that's fortunate enough—I'll e'en take a Leap in the Dark, and ſo happy be lucky ſay I. [*Leaps out, and hangs upon a Hook, by his Petticoats.*] Gadſo! what now?——'Sdeath I'm faſten'd to a Hook, and can't reach the Balcony to free my ſelf.

Enter Betty *in the Balcony.*

Betty. Sure his Fear has not carry'd him out of the Balcony head-foremoſt! Ha! by all that's miſchievous our unfortunate Knight-Errant, is hung faſt by the Petticoat——He's ſafe enough for one while. Now does my good Nature incline me to improve this Accident for my Lady's Diverſion; I muſt ſend *Tom* to him once more. [*Exit.*

Sir Amo. Sure ſome malevolent Star reign'd at my Nativity! What a Diſappointment have I met with to Night, to be hung up by the Middle like the Sign of the *Fleece*——If I ſhou'd be diſcover'd in this unfortunate Situation of my Affairs, I ſhou'd become the Scorn of the Ladies, and the Jeſt of the whole Town.

Enter the Butler, *and a Footman with a Flambeaux, who ſtands juſt under Sir* Amorous.

Ha! the Door opens! What will become of thee, poor Sir *Amorous*.

But [*Speaking to ſome within.*] Before ſecure all the Windows——I'll lock this Door, and take the Key with me——Ha! there's ſomething in the Keyhole.

Sir Amo. O this Son of a Whore will roaſt me alive with his damn'd Flambeaux.

But. So, 'tis lock'd at laſt, light to the *Mitre*. [*Exeunt.*

Sir Amo. To the Devil I hope—Egad I'm glad they're gone; I muſt have ſqueak'd for my Life if that Rogue had ſtood there much longer.

Enter Betty *in the Balcony.*

Betty. I have search'd all the Rooms and can't find him: He certainly must have leap'd this Balcony——My poor Mistress will run distracted.

Sir Amo. O my Dear art thou there? Prithee excogitate some Method to relieve me, for I am unfortunately hung here between Heaven and Earth.

Betty. Bless my Heart! you frighted me. What, are you fastned?

Sir Amo. Fastned! Yes, yes, I am fastned, like a Monkey, by the Loins.

Betty. Here, Sir, lay hold on the End of this Handkerchief, and I'll endeavour to pull you up, till you can catch hold of the Banniſters. [*She pulls him up.*

Sir Amo. Hoa up!——so, I have got Footing again, tho' I cannot say upon safe Ground.

Betty. My Mistress will be overjoy'd to see you Sir:—and now there is no Fear of her Brother——He'll be engag'd for two or three Hours at least, and by that Time you may be marry'd, and out of the Reach of his Resentment.

Sir Amo. Dear Child, I am eternally oblig'd to thee, and I hope this Intrigue will end more fortunately than it begun. [*Exeunt.*

The End of the Fourth ACT.

ACT V. SCENE *a Chamber.*

Enter Miranda, *Sir* Amorous *in Women's Cloaths, follow'd by* Betty.

Mir. DEAR Sir *Amorous*, 'tis impossible for Imagination to conceive the Concern I have been under for your unfortunate Discovery, which might have depriv'd me of the most valuable Blessing of my Life.

Sir Amo. But now, Madam, that obnoxious opake Cloud is dissipated, and Fortune once

nce more has plac'd us under the Sun-shine of Opportu-
ity, we ought to make the most judicious Advantage
f it we can.

Bet. I think, Madam, the Gentleman intimates very
visely, I have got a License in my Pocket, and a Par-
on in the Pantry: What hinders now but that you
repare for a short Grace, and fall too while your Sto-
achs are in good Humour: When the Business is once
ver, you may bid Defiance to all Brothers.

Mir. I have no other Way to make Reparation for
our Sufferings to Night: *Betty*, you may bring Sir *A-
norous* his Cloaths. [*Exit* Betty.] How I blush to
hink my Necessity shou'd oblige me to conceal so fine a
Gentleman under so mean a Disguise——

Sir Amo. Oh Madam! Love has occasion'd a Thousand
uch Metamorphosis; *Achilles* obscur'd his Valour under
Petticoat, for the Love of a fair Mistress. The Migh-
y *Hercules* once put on an Apron, and for Love was
whipt at a Spinning-Whee!——*Jupiter* himself has sub-
nitted to Disguises for to carry on his Amours.

Enter Betty *with Sir* Amorous's *Cloaths.*

Bet. Come, Sir, strip, strip——and put on your own
Cloaths. I have given the Doctor Notice, his Pipe and
is Bottle are just out, and he'll be ready for you in an
nstant. [*He pulls off the Women's Cloaths, and just
as he's in his Shirt, the Butler breaks o-
pen the Door and enters.*

Sir Amo. Dear Mistress *Betty*, I will make you a grate-
ul Acknowledgment for your Trouble——Ha! What
he Devil's here?

But. O vile Wretch! Have you got your Paramour
with you again? Ha! and naked too! O thou vile Pro-
litute!——But thus I'll revenge my injur'd Honour.

Mir. holding him. Oh, pray Sir, recal this dreadful
Resolution, and hear me Speak.

Sir Am. looking about. No Loophole to escape at——egad
I'll try if I can climb a Chimney. [*Runs up the Chimney.*

But. Ha! Are you so nimble? I may chance to fetch
you down before you get to your Journey's End, as
expeditious as you are——Here, *Peter*, bring me my
great Gun——I'll send a leaden Argument or two after

you to perſwade you to return: Why *Peter*, I ſay, brin me my great Gun. [*Looking up the Chimney*

Sir Amo. in the Chimney.] Oh! for Heav'ns ſake cour termand the Man with the great Gun, and I'll ſurrend at Diſcretion.

But. Quickly come down then, or I fire after you once. [*Still peep.*

Sir Amo. Oh, hold your Hand, and I'm with you i an Inſtant. Odſo! I have almoſt broke my Legs.

[*Tumbles down the Chimney all blac*

But. Now, Sir, what can you ſay to juſtifie or excu your villainous Deſign upon the Honour of my Family.

Sir Amo. Really, Sir, I am at preſent under ſuch Confuſion, that I know not well how to exhibit a pro per Anſwer to your Accuſation; but when you kno my Name and Quality, I doubt not but you'll thin more favourable of my Deſigns.

But. Pray, Sir, make me acquainted with 'em bot and quickly too, or——

Sir Amo. My Name is *Amorous Vainwit*, Knight, have a good Eſtate in the County of *Surrey*, whic with the Affection I bear your Siſter, may render m worthy your Favour——And I aſſure you, Sir, my In tentions are honourable.

But. That will admit of a Doubt; but if you are ho nourable, you may ſtand any Trial: You muſt excu me, if, after what I have ſeen, I can't credit your Na ration, but muſt defer your Examination 'till to Mo row Morning——In the mean Time, you muſt be co tented to remain a Priſoner in this Room——Madam, command you to your Chamber——Theſe Cloaths I mu ſecure 'till Morning——*Betty*, put out all the Lights i the Houſe, and go immediately to Bed, the Key of th Room I ſhall ſecure in my Pocket——

[*Exeunt with the Lights all but Sir* Am

Sir Amo. Oh! Misfortune unparalell'd——Why, th is infinitely worſe than being hung by the Loins at Balcony: Rivet me to the Centre, if ever I was ſo en barraſs'd ſince my firſt Entrance into humane Nature; muſt certainly be in a curſed Condition; well, 'tis Happineſs I am left to conſole my Misfortune in t

Dar

Dark, for a Candle and a Looking-Glass in the Room, would be present Death.

Enter Betty *with an old red Waistcoat, and Sir* Amorous's *Wig, leading in* Clarinda.

Hark! I hear the Door unlock, some Comfort, Fortune, I beseech thee.

Bet. Sir *Amorous!* Sir *Amorous!*

Sir Amo. Ay, here I am, almost starv'd to Death with Cold.

Bet. I consider'd your Condition, and have brought you an old Waistcoat that belongs to one of the Footmen, and your Wig, which my Master dropt upon the Stairs. [*She puts them on.*

Sir Amo. This is an Obligation I can never return; but how got you in?

Bet. Why, the Key of my Chamber-Door fitted this Lock; here is my Lady with me——Speak to him, Madam. [*Aside to* Clarinda.

Clar. You may see, Sir, what Difficulties true Love dare encounter with——We'll yet be happy in Spight of Fortune and my Brother; the Parson is still below Stairs, and may do his Office; you must dispense with its being perform'd in the Dark, since you are acquainted with the Necessity.

Sir Amo. Oh, Madam, there needs no Light where you are, the radiant Lustre of your Eyes would eclipse the Sun.

Bet. Come, come Sir, and Madam, defer these fine Speeches till a better Opportunity——and go and talk with the Parson. So now for the Colonel. [*Unlocks the Closet Door, pushes 'em both in.*] I must remove him a little farther off for the Present, I think I had as good bestow him in his own Lodging till this Wedding is over——Sir, Sir——[*Enter Colonel*] give me your Hand, amd follow me.

Col. This is a pretty Scene of Enchantment, where the Devil can this all End—— [*She leads him out.*

SCENE Changes to Col. Manly's *Lodgings.*

Enter thorough the private Door Betty *leading the* Colonel.

Bet. Stay here Sir, till I come to you [*Exit the same way*

Col.

Col. This is the oddeſt Adventure I ever met with, I ſuppoſe by and by I ſhall feel the Point of ſome jealous Cuckold's Sword at my Throat.

Enter Aſpin *drunk.*

Aſp. This Citron-Water is admirable Stuff; I have ſlept the Fire and Candle out; and I preſume my Maſter will hardly come home to Night, therefore I'll e'en grope my Way to his Bedchamber, and take a Nap 'till Morning.

Col. I think I hear ſome Body; I hope 'tis my little Emiſſary to conduct me back to the Lady.

Aſp. As a Proof of my Courage, I can venture into this Room that's haunted, and without a Light too; for ſince I have arm'd my ſelf with *Richard Baxter's* Dram of Comfort to a faint-hearted Sinner, I can bully the Devil.——

Col. Oh, 'tis ſhe——are you come, my Dear, I have waited with no ſmall Impatience——

Aſp. Oh, Lord, there's a Voice——and all my Reſolution is vaniſh'd at once: If I had but Courage now, wou'd I ſpeak to this Spirit, perhaps here is ſome Money hid, and it can't reſt 'till it be diſcover'd.

Col. Where are you, my Dear——[*Feels about, lays hold on* Aſpin, *then ſtarts back, and draws his Sword.* Damme, what's here, a Man?

Aſp. Oh! how my Heart akes, this is certainly a Thief, I'll e'en put my Conduct upon tryal, for I dare not truſt to my Courage.

Col. What are you? Speak this Minute, or my Sword's in your Guts;——Inform me what Houſe this is, and who's the Maſter of it; but ſpeak ſoftly, leaſt we are over-heard.

Aſp. Ay, ay, 'tis certainly a Thief; my Courage does really fail me, and I muſt frighten him by Stratagem——the Maſter of this Houſe is the Devil, he keeps Company with the Lady *Fairy*, and I am their chief Butler.

Col. What a-pox, have they thruſt me into a dark Room with a Madman?——I'll humour him a little——Prithee what's thy Maſter's Name?

Aſp. He is vulgarly diſtinguiſh'd by the Title of Colonel *Manly*.

Col.

Col. The Devil he is——*Aſpin.*

Aſp. That's my Name——Maſter is it you? Why how came you here?

Col. Nay, if you go to that, What Art Magick brought you here? Did you follow my Chair, and ſlip into this Apartment to hide your ſelf?

Aſp. Follow your Chair! My poor Maſter has been Drinking I perceive: Pray Sir, which way did you return here ſince you went out?

Col. Why, you are drunk you Raſcal!

Aſp. Poor Man, he's prodigiouſly overtaken——but pray, Sir, which way did you come in? I'm ſure I had the Key of the Room in my Pocket.

Col. Room! Why what Room is this?

Aſp. Even your own Sir, or the Devils.

Col. What do you mean, we are a great Way from Home.

Aſp. Why then the Devil has carried the Room through the Air by Enchantment.

Col. You have a mind to make me looſe my Senſes——

Aſp. Ay, poor Gentleman, t'other Bottle had done the Buſineſs——

Col. [*feeling about*] Ha! This is certainly the Door of my Room——Which way ſhou'd I come hither——Certainly we are under the Power of Enchantment——You Raſcal, I'll teach you to be drunk when I am out of the Way——Why have not you a Light.

Aſp. Why, really Sir, I took a Nap by the Fire-ſide, ſo at laſt I wak'd, Sir——And I ſaw I was in the Dark, Sir——But the People of the Houſe are up, Sir——If you pleaſe I'll go and fetch a Candle——

Col. No Matter, ſtay here——I'll fetch one my ſelf——

[*Exit and locks the Door.*

Aſp. O dear! What, has he lockt the Door——Gad my Heart akes——Either my Maſter is plaguy Drunk, and does not know what he ſays, or elſe the Devil has been very buſie.

Enter Betty *at the ſecret Door, leading in Sir* Amorous.

Bet. Stay here till my Lady has put on her Night-cloaths, and then ſhe'll come and conduct you to her Bed-Chamber——but be ſure make no Noiſe.

Sir.

Sir Amo. No, no; I'll be as ſtill as a Lover hid in a Lady's Cloſet, when the leaſt Noiſe wou'd alarm the Husband, and make his Horns viſible.

Bet. Now for the Colonel—— [*Feeling about lays hold of* Aſpin. What are you aſleep, Sir?——you are a dull Lover indeed——Come Colonel, my Lady has got rid of all her Company at laſt.

Aſp. Ha! a Woman's Hand, and a moiſt one, that's no ill Sign——my Maſter has ſome damn'd Intrigue on Foot, which he durſt not truſt me with, ſhe takes me for my Maſter: I'll e'en ſupply his Place, and that way let my ſelf into the Secret—— [*Aſide.*

Bet. Come away, Sir; but don't ſpeak a Word for your Life.

Aſp. No, no; I'll be ſilent as a Lawyer before he receives his Fee.

Sir Amo. Well it is a ſufficient Conſolation to me, for [*Exeunt* Aſp. *and* Betty *through the private Place.* this Night's Sufferings, to think I have concluded 'em ſo fortunately, in the Marriage of ſo rich and beautiful a Woman—— [*Col.* Manly *unlocks the Chamber-Door, enters with a Candle,* Sir Amo. *ſeeing him, ſtands amazed in a Corner.*

Col. Come ye drunken Sot, take the Candle and light me to Bed; and if ever you are guilty——hu——what gone—ſure 'tis impoſſible. [*Looks about, ſees Sir* Amo. Ha! What the Devil are you?

Sir Amo. Ha! Col. *Manly,* as I hope for Immortality I thought I had been—Why, where the Devil am I—

Col. In my Lodging, Sir, at preſent——but how you came here, I ſhou'd be very glad to know——

Sir Amo. Came here!——egad, I never was ſo confounded in my Life——Why I came in at the Door, I think.

Col. That's impoſſible; for I have had the Key in my Pocket——how my Man got out, or you came in, I can't imagine——But what the Devil do you do in this Diſguiſe, have you been Maſquerading.

Sir Amo. No, I have been Intriguing——

Col.

Col. What like a Cat a top of the Houſe, and ſo tumbled down the Chimney into my Lodging.

Sir Amo. Why 'faith, Colonel, that's what you may reaſonably ſuppoſe by my Dreſs——

Enter Courtwell.

Court. Dear Colonel, I am glad you are come Home; wiſh me Joy, Joy, Joy, Man!

Col. You have always a great deal in your Looks; 'faith, *Charles*, 'tis impoſſible ever to read a Diſappointment in thy Face; What! are you married?

Court. Not directly turn'd off, but as near it as a Man is being hang'd when the Sheriff cries, Drive away Carman; I am juſt going to leap into the conjugal Gulph.

Col. The Widow has conſented at laſt, Sir.

Court. Conſented! Ha, ha, ha, No 'faith ſhe has not, nor knows nothing of the Matter; ſhe's in Bed, and aſleep too for ought that I know, and not ſo much as Dreams of a Husband. In ſhort, Colonel, finding there was no hope of Succeſs by a regular Siege; I have brib'd the Governour, who has promis'd to open the Gates, and let me in at Midnight.

Col. This is all myſterious, I can't poſſibly conceive what you mean by it.

Court. Mean, why I mean to get ſuch a Generation of Boys and Girls, as ſhall put the weekly Bills out of Countenance, as Sir *Sampſon* ſays: I have laid ſuch a Deſign, that it were the Height of Folly to fear a Diſappointment——Here's the magical Circle, and here's my Indentures for Life——[*Shews a Ring and a Licenſe.*] In ſhort, before the Concluſion of this Night, I'll marry her in Spight of her Teeth, and go to Bed to her—with all her Heart.

Col. 'Faith *Charles*, thou'rt the moſt ſanguine Fellow in thy hopes I ever knew.

Court. Come, Colonel, you muſt go along with me, and aſſiſt me in my Deſign; how now! what the Devil have you got here! a Baboon in a full-bottom Wig?

Col. Don't you know him! 'tis Sir *Amorous Vainwit*.

Court. Sir *Amorous*! Ha, ha, ha, how the Devil came you in this Pickle? What, forc'd to run up a Chimney

Chimney to save your own Bones, and a Lady's Reputation.

Col. Sir *Amorous* and I have met with some odd Adventures to Night; we have found our selves in this Room together, and neither of us can tell how we got here.

Court. No! Prithee Sir *Amorous*, how came all this about?

Sir *Am.* Why I'll tell you Mr. *Courtwell* as much of the Matter as I really can; I was taken out of the Piazza in *Covent-Garden*, put in a Hackney-Chair, and carry'd ——'faith I can't tell where ——but to a Rich Widows House who is passionately in Love with me, and to whom I was married within this Quarter of an Hour, and afterwards conducted into her Bed-chamber by the Maid, as the Girl told me: But the Colonel coming in with a Candle, I found (to my great Surprize as well as his) I was in his Lodging.

Col. This Adventure is in every Circumstance like mine, but the matrimonial Part; I was taken out of the Piazza to Night, put into a Chair, carried a considerable Way, and at last set down in a strange House; where I had not been long, before a beautiful young Lady came to me, with whom I had not discours'd five Minutes, but we were alarm'd by the unexpected approach of her Brother; upon which the Lights were put out, and I was conducted in the Dark by the Maid into another Room, where I presently was surpriz'd by the Voice of my Man *Aspin*, who told me I was in my own Lodging, but which Way I came here, I am confounded to think; my Man being Drunk, I went down to the Maid of the House for a Light; lock'd *Aspin* in the Room; but when I return'd with a Candle, my Man was vanish'd, and Sir *Amorous* left in his Place.

Court. Egad I'll lay my Life these are some of my Sister's Tricks——for all this must certainly be done by the Help of some private Door, and now I call it to mind, my Brother *Tom* (who is now at Sea) told me formerly of one which he had made through his own Chamber for the Conveniency of visiting a Gentleman's Wife who then liv'd in your House.

Col.

Col. It must be so, then——but I can see no Appearance of one in the Wainscot.

Court. Perhaps it may be visible on the other Side only: Stay here but two Minutes, I'll go into my Sister's Dressing-Room, which joins to this, and try if I can make any Discovery.

Sir. Amo. If he finds a Trap Door there, I may be in Hopes to come to a speedy Knowledge of my Wife.

Col. But Sir *Amorous*, was you really marry'd to Night?

Sir Amo. Or else may the Brilliant of my Countenance for ever labour under this fatal Eclipse.

Col. But how came you in this damn'd dirty Condition?

Sir Amo. The Narration wou'd be too prolix for the small Duration of this Opportunity; but when my Eyes are once more bless'd with the benign Prospect of my fair Bride, I'll tell you the whole Adventure.

Enter Courtwell *thro' the private Door.*

Court. Ha, ha, ha, the Riddle is expounded Colonel; now you know which way your invisible Mistress went——Come, come, make no Words, but let us go and surprize 'em their own Way——and then to the Widow, who now, Colonel, I dare tell you, lodges in the very House with my Sister.

[*Exeunt thro' the private Door.*

SCENE changes to Miranda's *Chamber.*

Enter Miranda *with a Candle.*

Mir. So! Now this Marriage is over, I may have Leisure to talk to the Colonel——Poor Sir *Amorous*! I can't help laughing, to think how his Vanity will be mortify'd, when he finds who 'tis he has marry'd—— Well, 'tis a Punishment due to his impudent Boasting. How, now, *Betty*, whom have you brought here?

Enter Betty *leading in* Aspin.

Bet. Bless me, Madam! I'm surpriz'd at the Blunder I have made!——I swear——I took him in the Dark, for the Colonel!

Asp. And why not, Mrs. *Combbrush*?——Egad

a clever Sort of a Woman——Ay, Master, Master, I've found you out faith——Egad, I'll e'en say something that's pretty to her my self——Madam, Madam.

Mir. How came you to bring this drunken Fellow here?

Asp. By mere Accident, I believe, Madam——But however, Madam, I hope in the whole you'll have no Reason to repent the Mistake, for you know, Madam, there's an old Proverb, which says, Joan *is as good as my Lady in the Dark*, according to that, why mayn't *Roger* be as good as his Master?

Mir. The Fellow is going to make Love to me, as I live!

Asp. Why, Madam, there is no Difference betwixt a Colonel and a Foot Soldier; and I have known a common Man do as good Service at a Breach as an Officer.

Enter Courtwell, *Colonel* Manly, *and Sir* Amorous, *out of the Closet.*

Mir. Ha! bless me, which way came you all in my Closet?

Court. Oh! Don't be frighted Sister, we got there by the Help of a private Door, through which a certain young Lady has made many Excursions to play at Riddle-me-Riddle——But here are two Gentlemen, the one comes to make Enquiry after a Wife which he has got here, and the other after a Heart he has lately lost; I suppose you can give him Tidings of that.

Col. Were you the little Fairy, the lovely Shadow which haunted me——I am a Riddle, expound me and take me, that was your Promise, Madam, and here I stand to claim it.

Court. Come Sister, I read a kind of Compliance in your Looks, but I'll save your Blushes, by giving you to him by the Authority of a Brother——There, Colonel, take her, you are equally Mad, and fit for one another.

Sir Amo. Now the Mystery is open, and from my mouth you may both hear your Disappointment—Know then, Sir, you have no Power to bestow so rich a Gift, nor you, Sir, to accept it, I being already married to that Lady; now, Colonel, notwithstanding my Vanity, and

and your prodigious Merit, you are convinc'd the Lady has had a quite different Opinion of us; for it is my good Fortune, in Consideration to my superiour Merit, to possess the Substance, while you, for your Vanity, like a disappointed Ixion, have only embrac'd a Shadow, and for your Ambition, are doom'd to the perpetual Wheel of Derision.

Col. What does your Ignorance mean?

Sir Amo. What does your Wisdom think I mean?

Court. How Sir, married to my Sister?

Sir Amo. It is my good Fortune——I appeal to the Lady for a Confirmation.

Mir. Why real'y Sir *Amorous*, you have been a considerable while in the Dark, and 'tis high Time now to open your Eyes——Know then, Gentlemen, that Sir *Amorous* is not——married to me.

Sir Amo. Bless me, Madam! what do you mean! not marry'd!

Mir. Marry'd you are, but not to me, upon my Word:

Sir Amo. Why, Madam, pray recollect, was not I marry'd to you within this Quarter of an Hour?

Mir. No, Sir——[*Enter* Clarinda.] But here is a Lady who was marry'd to you within this Quarter of an Hour——Look on her!——Lord, Sir, you are as Shy, as if she were an old Acquaintance.

Sir Amo. How, *Clarinda!* the Devil, marry'd to her! then I am the most miserable Dog the Sun ever shone upon.

Court. Prithee Sister solve this Riddle:

Sir Amo. Ay, dear Madam, do me the Favour to let me know how all this came about?

Mir. Why then Sir, thus it was:——*Clarinda* was drinking a Dish of Tea with me this Afternoon, when my Brother came in, who was recommending you to me for an humble Servant, but she being too well acquainted with your Inconstancy, in Charity to me, and hoping some Redress of her Wrongs, inform'd me of your Treachery to her; upon which, in Justice to my Sex, and to free my self from the Addresses of a Person I had no great Opinion of from the Report of my Ac-

quaintance, (for I never saw you before in my Life. I was induc'd to send you that Amorous Epistle, which so soon brought you to my House, and the better to incline you to an immediate Marriage, I gave into your Hands sixteen Thousand Pounds in Bank Bills, which you know I oblig'd you to put in your Pocket-Book the Recovery of which, I had contriv'd in the Story of my Jealous Brother, who you may remember interrupted our Amorous Discourse, and occasion'd you to leave your Coat, with your Pocket-Book in it, to make your Escape in a Suit of my Cloaths, and a second Time to retire with Precipitation up the Chimney, which prepared the reasonable Excuse for your being marry'd in the Dark to this Lady instead of me; so you are both beholden to my Invention: She for Justice,——and you for a Wife.

Col. Pray Sir *Amorous* who do you think resembles *Ixion* now?

Sir Am. I'll renounce Womankind, and proclaim War upon the whole Sex! —— And is your Fortune in the *Indies*, my Dear?

Clar. I'd have you go see, my Dear.

Sir Am. And suppose I shou'd, my Dear?

Clar. Then perhaps when you return, your Head may be better furnish'd.——

Sir Am. With Branches of your own planting, I don't doubt my Dear.

Clar. As soon as with more Wit, I dare say, my Dear

[*Enter* Necessary] *Whispers* Courtwell.

Court. I come, ——Gentlemen and Ladies, now I shall want your Assistance, I'd have you follow me as soon as possible, the Musick is all ready.——

Col. Sir *Amorous*, you must assist in the Design:

Sir Am. O pardon me! what in this Dress!

Col. O there will be more Masqueraders; besides you had better your self make a Jest of what has happen'd, and that way disappoint the ill-natur'd Town of doing it for you. [*Exeunt*

SCENE changes to Lady Outside's *Apartment.*

Enter Col. Manly, *Sir* Amorous, Clarinda, Miranda Betty, *Singers and Dancers.*

Mir

Mir. Play, play, play briskly Gentlemen, ——— this is her Bed-chamber; I'm resolv'd we'll have Entrance.——— [*Knocking.*

Enter Necessary.

Nec. Bless me, Madam! what's the Matter?

Mir. We are come to wish your Lady Joy, and throw the Stocking.

Nec. Joy, Madam, of what! why my Lady's just gone to Bed.

Mir. I'm sorry for that, I came on Purpose to undress her.

Col. But, Madam, tho' you are come too late to perform that Ceremony,——we'll go in and throw the Stocking.

Mir. Ay, In, In, In,——— [*Forcing in.*

Nec. Lord! Madam! what d'ye mean? You would not have the Gentlemen go into my Lady's Chamber now she's in Bed? [*Exit and shuts the Door.*

Mir. Come, come, play again, Gentlemen, [*Here the Musick plays, and a Song.*] [*Knocking.*] we come to wish you Joy, Madam, and are resolv'd to see you to Night in the Arms of your Bridegroom, therefore you had as good open the Door, and let us come in.

Enter Lady Outside, *as just risen from Bed, and* Necessary.

L. Out. Dear *Miranda!* what do you mean by this unseasonable Frolick? Your merry Temper, I vow, carries you beyond the Rules of good Manners.

Mir. See what 'tis to have a Husband! what early Hours it makes a Woman keep, a Bed before Eleven.

L Out. A Husband, nay now you're Rude! What d'ye mean?

Mir. Did you think to steal a Wedding? Come, come, we're all come to wish you Joy, to have one Dance with you, and then throw the Stocking——Gentlemen, this is my Sister.

Omn. We wish you Joy, Madam! ——

L. Out. Miranda, this is carrying the Jest too far, to expose me thus before Strangers.

Mir. You know every Body but this Gentleman, and he's my Brother's particular Friend, and I know for his Sake, he's welcome———Come, what does this idle

Bridegroom lie in Bed, and suffer his Bride to be thus long from his Arms?

L. Out. Why sure you are distracted! I marry'd! how came you to dream of such a Thing?

Mir. It signifies nothing to deny it, Madam, I know, and so does all this Company, that you were marry'd to my Brother this very Morning——Come, come, we'll go and fetch him out of Bed. [*Running in.*

L. Out. Hold, *Miranda*! I thought you had more Respect to the Decencies of our Sex, than to carry Gentlemen into my Bed-chamber.

Mir. Nay, Sister, you may shut the Door, but positively he shall get up, or we'll disturb the whole Neighbourhood.—Musick, play again,——[*They play.*] We'll raise the Devil, but we'll have him out of your Bed-chamber.

L. Out. I'm sure you must conjure, if you do.——[*Enter* Courtwell *as from the Bed-chamber, in a Night-Gown, Night-Cap, and Slippers.*] Ha!——Oh! Heaven! which way got he there?

Omn. Oh! Mr. *Courtwell*, we wish you Joy, Joy, Joy.

Court. Gentlemen and Ladies, I'm oblig'd to you for your good Wishes, but this is a Compliment I must own I could well have spar'd, since it was the Desire of my fair Spouse to keep our Nuptials a Secret——Come, my Dear, don't be out of Humour, you find 'tis impossible to conceal our Marriage any longer, tho' upon my Soul, I can't imagine by what Means they came to know it.

L. Out. Know what, thou base impudent Wretch? Art thou not asham'd.

Court. Not I, as I hope to be sav'd, Madam; on the contrary, I think my self the happiest Man on Earth, in the Possession of so charming a Bride.

L. Out. This is a base Confederacy; and you *Miranda*, I can never forgive, who I suppose are the main Instrument in this Design, to trick me into a Marriage with your audacious Brother.

Court. Come, come, prithee my Dear, disperse these unbecoming Frowns, I swear you carry the Jest too far now.

L. Out.

L. Out. I never saw so much Assurance in my Life; but if it be possible to call a Blush into that impudent Face of thine, I'll do it.——Here *Necessary*, pray do you satisfy these Gentlemen and Ladies what you know of this Affair, and speak nothing but the Truth I charge you.

Nec. Nay, Madam, you need not give me that Caution, for I never told a Lye in my whole Life.

Court. Ay, Ay, do you hear, *Necessary*, tell the Truth now your Lady has given you leave.

Nec. Then I must needs say——you have wedded and bedded my Lady.

Court. Your Humble Servant, Madam——Strike up Musick——Gentlemen and Ladies pray know my Wife.

L. Out. This is all a Piece of concerted Villainy to ruin me, but tho' I am a Woman, I have Friends in the World may call you to an Account for this barbarous Imposition.

[*Going up to her, she turns away from him, and frowns in Contempt.*

Court. Prithee my Dear, don't make your self so very Ridiculous, upon my Soul, you'll make me blush for your Folly;——come, come, this Humour is impertinent, and I don't like it;——did you think I marry'd you to keep it a Secret from the World?——Know your Duty Madam, and let me be obey'd.

L. Out. Was there ever such Insolence?

Court. Come, come, I say no more——Why what am I ha?

L. Out. An impudent Villain.

Court. How!

L. Out. I have said it, Sir.

Court. Certainly the Woman is distracted!

L. Out. Or this will make me so. [*Going up to her and Smiling.*

Court. An hast thou really the Assurance to deny being married to me then? Pray Madam will you be pleas'd to tell the Company upon what Account you and I have been in Bed together to Night.

L. Out. In Bed together! Oh! I shall burst with Passion, base Man. [*Cries.*

Court.

Court. Lord! what obſtinate Creatures theſe Women are, when they can't have their Will.

Col. I'm ſurpriz'd, Madam, you ſhou'd be ſuch an Enemy to your own Reputation, as to perſiſt in denying your Marriage, after what we have ſeen.

L. Out. Why, what have you ſeen, Sir.

Col. We have ſeen you, Madam, come out of your Chamber, at Eleven a-Clock at Night, as riſen from your Bed, and followed immediately by a luſty young Fellow, whom we reaſonably ſuppoſe, by his Diſabille, and his own Confeſſion, has been your Companion there; ſo if you pleaſe, Madam, you may ſtill deny your Marriage, and by that, give the cenſorious World a Reaſon to ſuſpect your Vertues.

L. Out. What can I do in this Affair?——Sir, Mr. *Courtwell*, pray give me leave to ſpeak a Word with you in private.

Court Ay, my Dear, with all my Heart.

L. Out. Pray tell me, Sir; do you deſign to perſiſt in this impudent Trick?

Court. Indeed I do Madam.

L. Out. And don't you think you have a great deal of Impudence?

Court. A Sort of modeſt Aſſurance, Madam, fit to carry me thro' ſuch an Undertaking.

L. Out. Why you won't pretend to make me believe you have marry'd me, and been in Bed with me?

Court. No, Madam, you know better, I have only made my Friends believe that—Come Widow, I know you have no deſpicable Opinion of my Perſon, therefore if you wou'd preſerve your Reputation, and avoid the Laughter of your Acquaintance, e'en come into my Deſign at once, and own a Marriage with me; I have a Licence in my Pocket, and a Parſon by my Appointment in the Cloſet, it will be eaſy to make an Excuſe for a Quarter of an Hour, while he does his Office, return to our Friends, have a Dance, and a Bottle, then to Bed, and bid fair for a Brace of Boys that ſhall inherit their Mother's Beauty——(*L. Out.*) and their Father's Modeſty: (*Court.*) Right, Madam, and thus I ſeal the Agreement.

L. Out.

L. Out. There's an irresistable Perswasion in his Lips, and a World of Rhetorick in his Kisses. Don't you expect I shou'd use you Scurvily, if I shou'd consent to marry you?

Court. No, my Dear; I'll do so well by thee, you shall never have Reason to say you were marry'd for your Sins.

L. Out. Well, Gentlemen and Ladies, I find 'tis in vain to deny it any longer, I—am—what shall I say?

Court. I am marry'd—— [*Prompting her.*

L. Out. I am marry'd——I wou'd have conceal'd it for some important Reasons I had, but now I freely own I have dispos'd of my Person by a Lease for Life.

Court. And I'm the Man that shall inhabit the Tenement—— [*Kisses her.*

(*Sings.*) *Her Lips are so balmy sweet,*
Such Magick there is in a Kiss,
That when thus we kindly meet,
I long for the nameless Bliss.

Omn. We wish you Joy, Madam. [*Salute her.*

Sir Amo. Madam, I wish you Joy too, and am sorry I can't shew the Respect I ought: But you'll excuse my Disabille?

L. Out. Pray Sir *Amorous* what's your Meaning for this Disguise?

Mir. He's doing Penance (tho' not in a white Sheet) for some Crimes committed against our Sex, I'll take an Opportunity to tell your Ladyship the whole Affair.

Court. Come, we'll make Use of the Entertainment which our Friends have been so kind to provide for us——You'll give me Leave my Dear to lead you up in a Country-Dance. [*They dance.*] Come my fair Spouse; for thy engaging Charms, I gladly quit the barren Pleasures of the Town, in the Fruition of thy Love! I'll fix my future Happiness:

On Earth we find no Joys so lasting prove.
As the chaste Raptures of Connubial Love,

The End of the Fifth ACT.

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. CROSS.

NOW, that we've done our beſt, [perhaps you'll ſay,
There's nothing New in what [you've ſeen to Day.
How ſhould an impudent young [Fop miſcarry,
With a poor Soul that ſwore ſhe ne'er would [marry?
For by your wicked Rules, you take for good,
Widows ſhould be like Almanacks underſtood:
You read 'em backwards, like a Witches Pray- [er,
You fear they'll jilt you, if they ſpeak you fair:
And, without caſting Figures, high or low,
You comprehend them when they anſwer, No.

In our Sex, theſe Arts are nothing new,
They're old Examples which we took from you.
You firſt began the War of Oaths and Lies,
And always kept it on with good Supplies:
But theſe you have forſaken ſome Time ſince,
For that more powerful Vertue, Impudence:

A

A Thing of such infallible Success,
It prospers only by its Emptyness:
You call it Courage, when 'tis dress'd in Red,
But yet it seldom dies in Honour's Bed:
It changes at the Bar to Eloquence,
Tho' ignorant of Law, and void of Sense.
'Tis Wit, 'tis Beauty, and 'tis manly Grace,
It mightily sets off a hideous ugly Face:
A prosperous Folly, that without Pretence,
Still Lords it over Breeding, Wit and Sense.
When arm'd with this Temptation you assail us,
O Cupid! *what will all our Arts avail us!*
In vain our Affectations we apply,
Whilst you the Force of strong Assurance try.

FINIS.